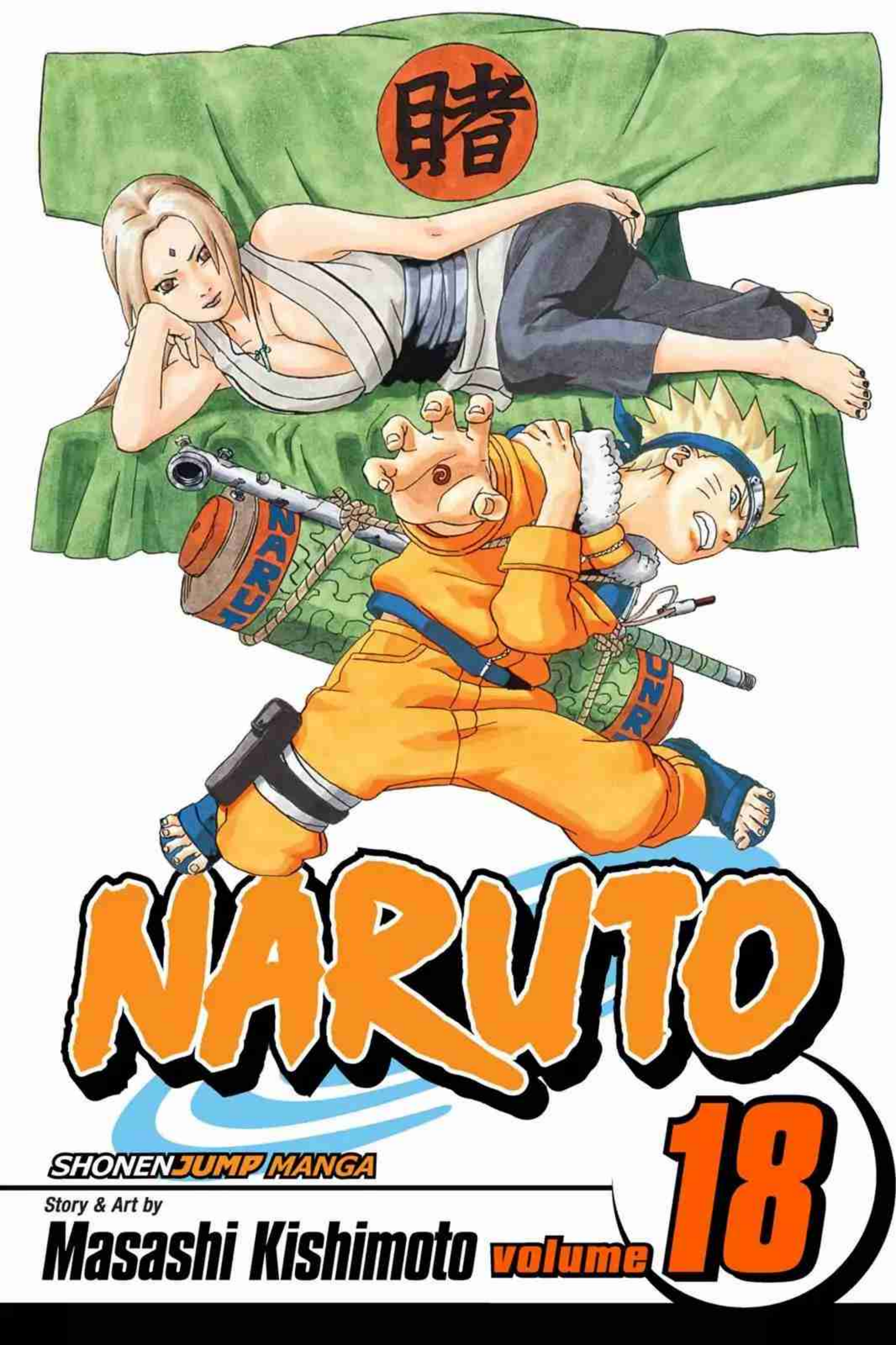
賭
NARUTO
SHONEN JUMP MANGA
Story & Art by
Masashi Kishimoto
volume 18

Recently, my shoulder pain has been getting worse...And it seems to always be my left shoulder. Why does my left shoulder get stiff when I'm right-handed? It's one of the Seven Great Mysteries of Kishimoto.

—*Masashi Kishimoto, 2003*

岸本斉史

Author/artist Masashi Kishimoto was born in 1974 in rural Okayama Prefecture, Japan. After spending time in art college, he won the Hop Step Award for new manga artists with his manga **Karakuri** (Mechanism). Kishimoto decided to base his next story on traditional Japanese culture. His first version of **Naruto**, drawn in 1997, was a one-shot story about fox spirits; his final version, which debuted in **Weekly Shonen Jump** in 1999, quickly became the most popular ninja manga in Japan.

NARUTO VOL. 18
SHONEN JUMP Manga Edition

STORY AND ART BY MASASHI KISHIMOTO

Translation & English Adaptation/Mari Morimoto
Touch-up Art & Lettering/Mark McMurray
Design/Yvonne Cai
Editor/Joel Enos

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NARUTO is rated T for Teen and is recommended for ages 13 and up. This volume contains realistic and fantasy violence.

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SHONEN JUMP MANGA EDITION

NARUTO

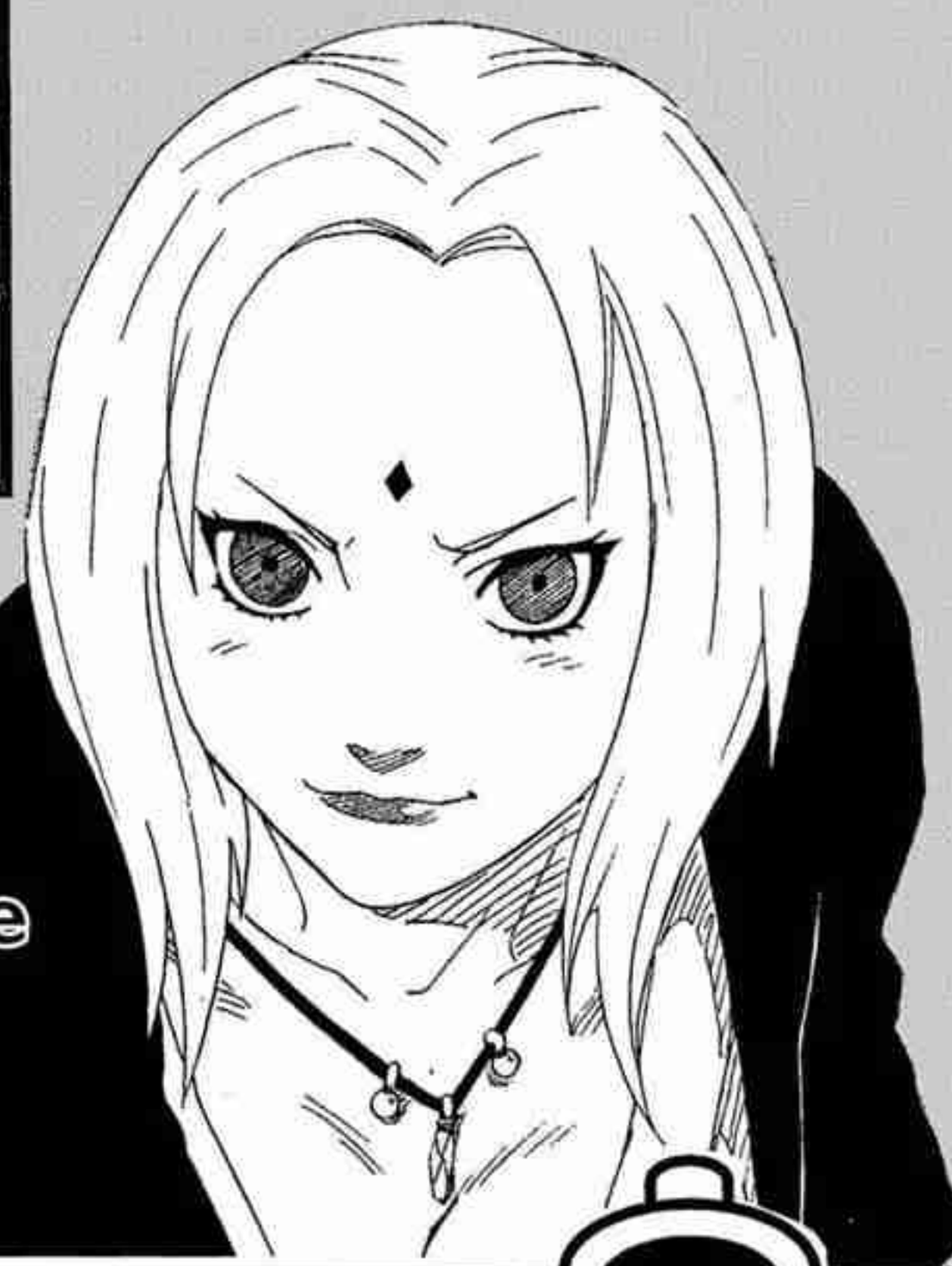
VOL. 18
TSUNADE'S CHOICE

STORY AND ART BY
MASASHI KISHIMOTO

CHARACTERS

Jiraiya
自来也

Shizune
シズネ



Tsunade
綱手（ツナデ）

The Story So Far...

Twelve years ago a destructive nine-tailed fox spirit attacked the ninja village of Konohagakure. The Hokage, or village champion, defeated the fox by sealing its soul into the body of a baby boy. Now that boy, Uzumaki Naruto, has grown up to be a ninja-in-training, learning the art of ninjutsu with his teammates Sakura and Sasuke.

Naruto and company take on the Chûnin Selection Exams but suffer a sudden attack from Orochimaru in the Forest of Death. Orochimaru leaves a curse mark on Sasuke's body and vanishes, only to return *during* the final rounds to launch *Operation Destroy Konoha!*

While Naruto battles Gaara, the Third Hokage falls to Orochimaru. But Konohagakure is saved and Jiraiya and Naruto set out to hunt down the future Fifth Hokage, Tsunade. On the way, they encounter Itachi, Sasuke's demented older brother...

NARUTO

VOL. 18
TSUNADE'S CHOICE

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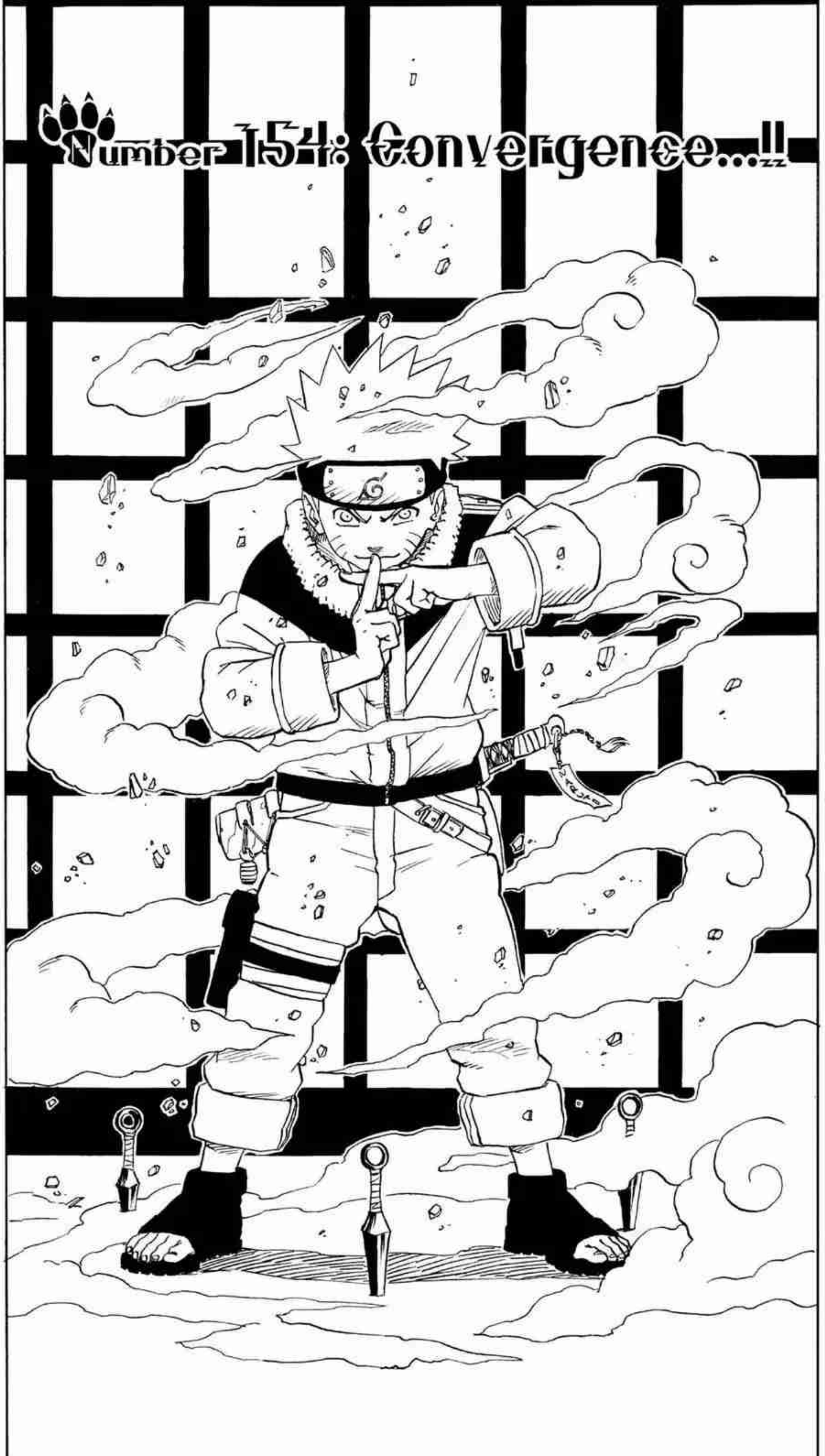
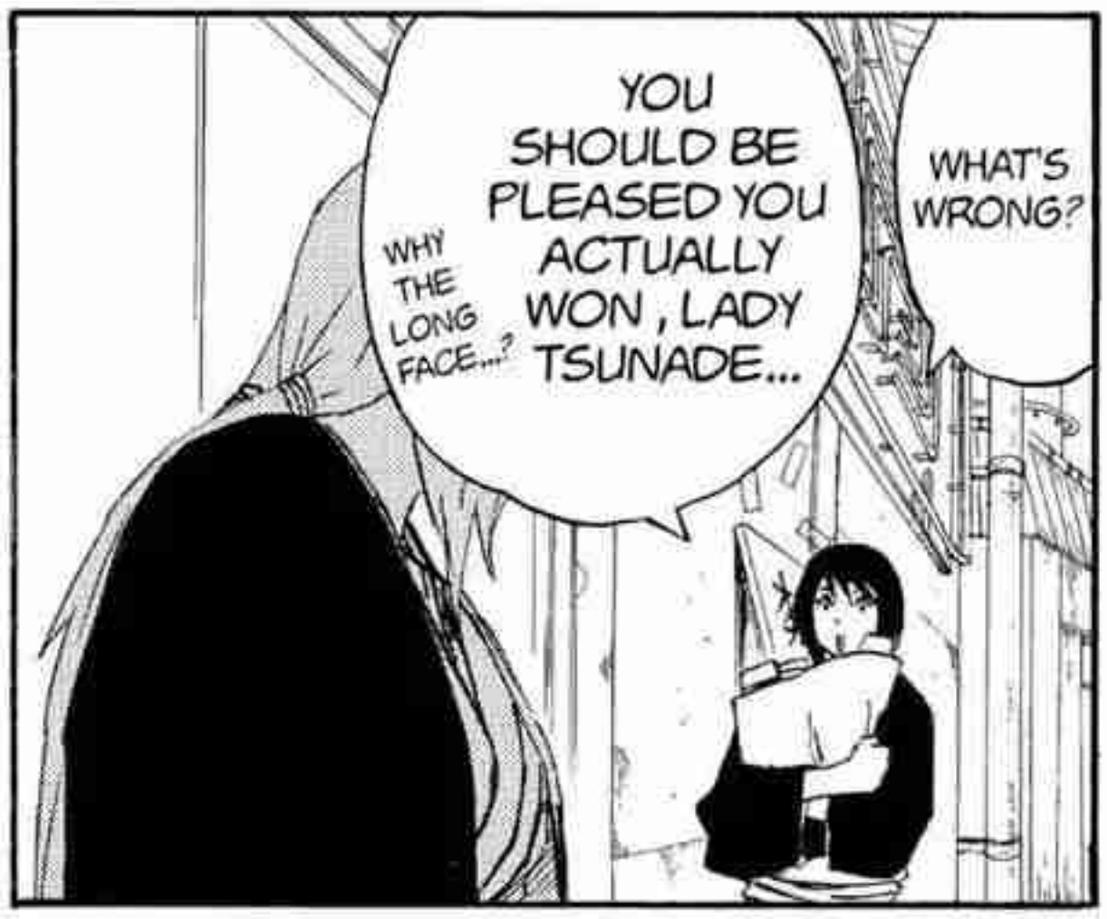
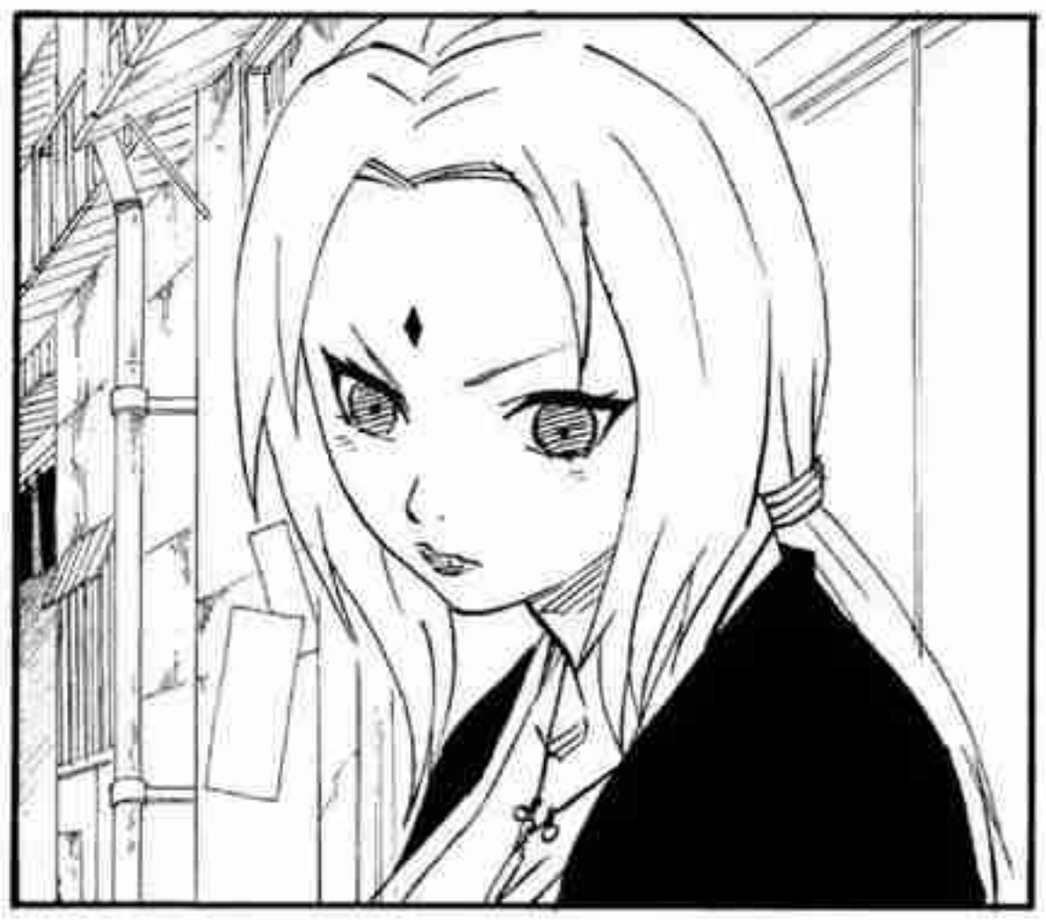
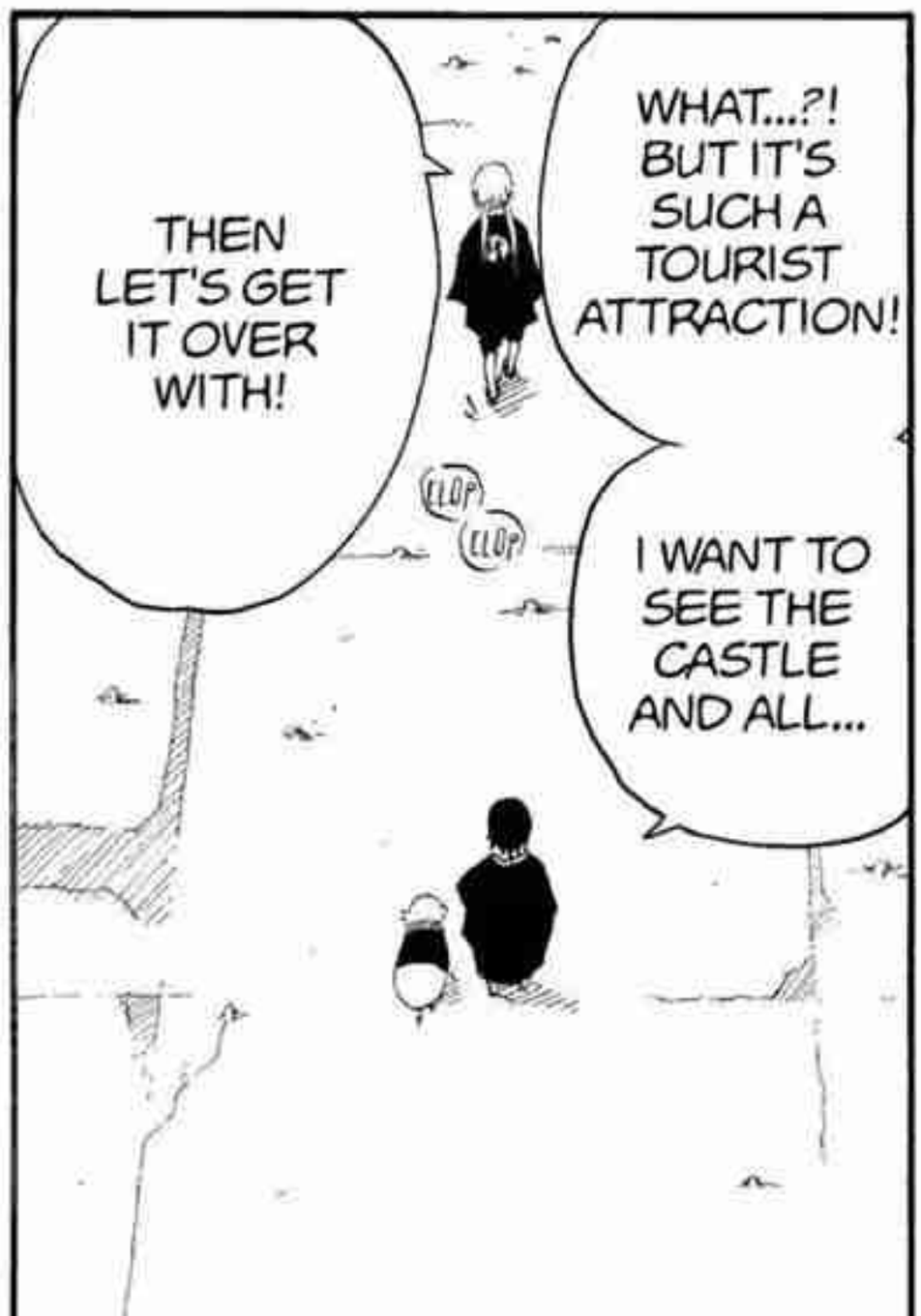


(Sign: Pachinko)



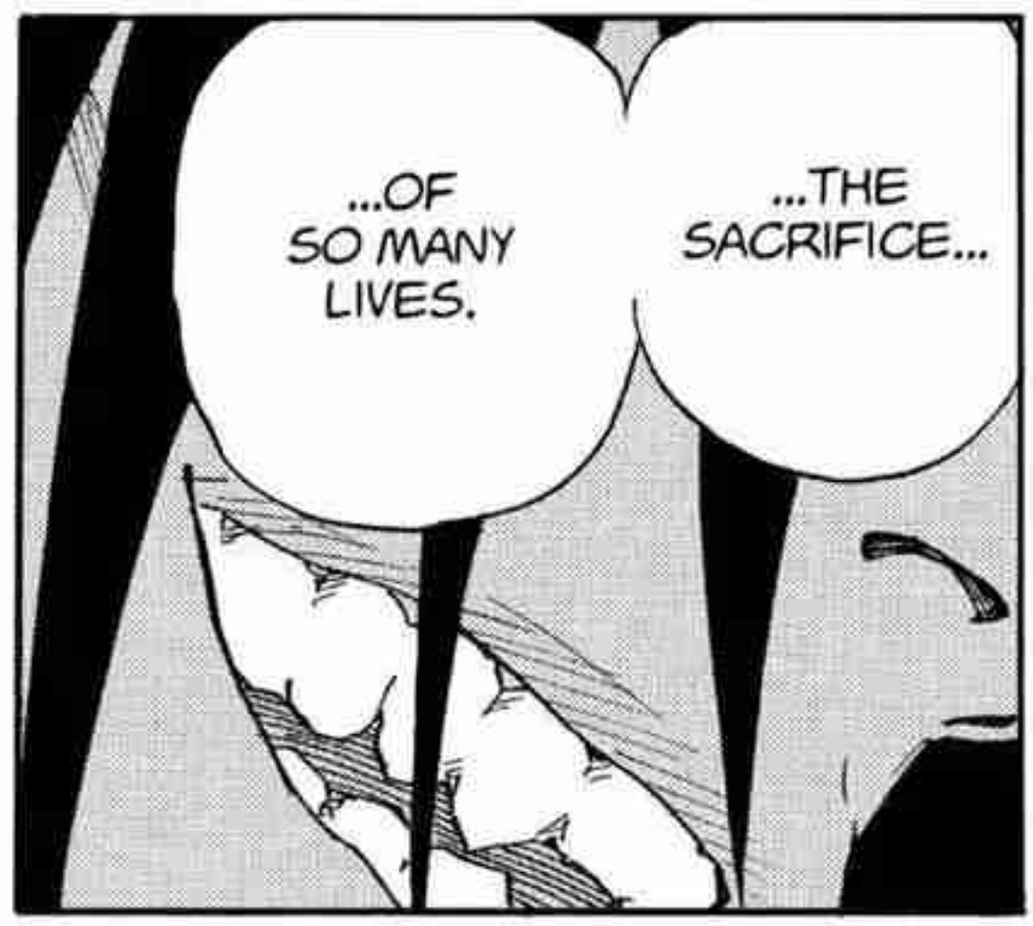


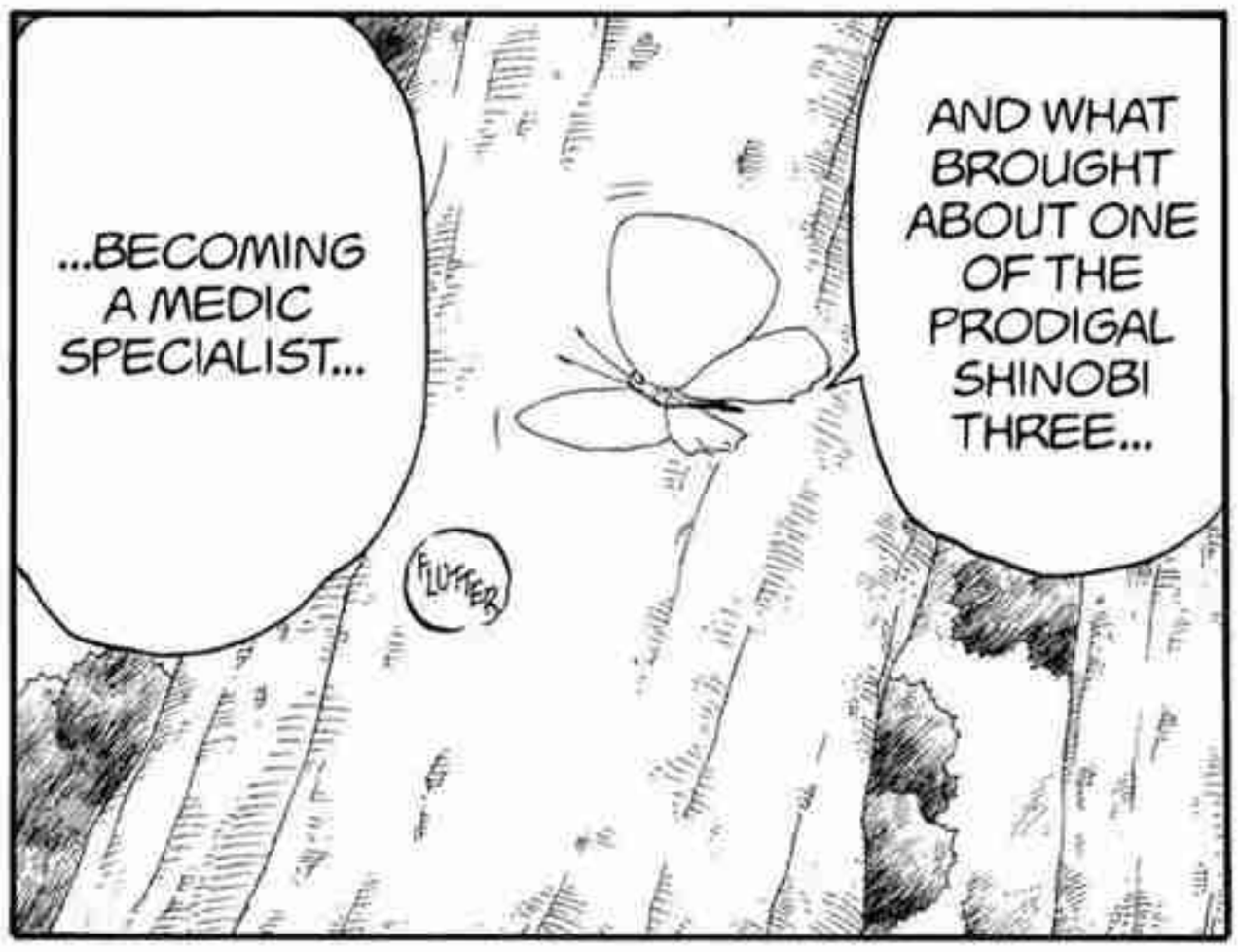


SINCE...I WAS PART OF THE MEDICAL CORPS AT ONE POINT.
I KNOW A LITTLE BIT ABOUT LADY TSUNADE TOO, YOU KNOW.
...EVEN THOUGH IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS WHAT HAPPENS TO ORDINARY FIGHTING UNITS WITHOUT EMERGENCY MEDICAL KNOW-HOW...
BUT BACK THEN, IT WAS A GROUND-BREAKING NOTION...
...ON THE BATTLEFIELD.
...HUMPH...
...HAVING A MEDIC SPECIALIST IN THE BASIC FOUR MAN CELL.
SHE WAS THE FIRST TO PROPOSE...
SOMETHING WE TAKE FOR GRANTED THESE DAYS...

IT WAS PURE AND SIMPLE WAR EXPERIENCE THAT LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR THAT IDEA...

HUMPH...



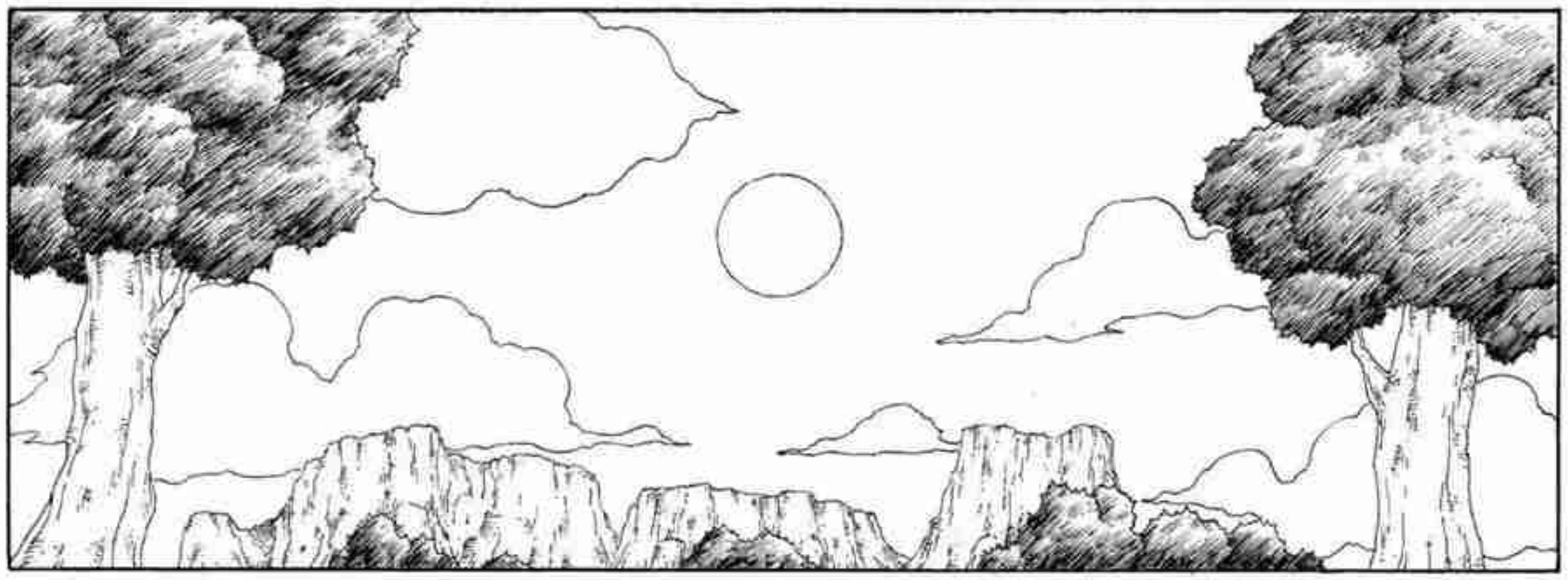


...WAS SIMPLY THE DESIRE TO AVOID MORE LOSS OF LIFE...

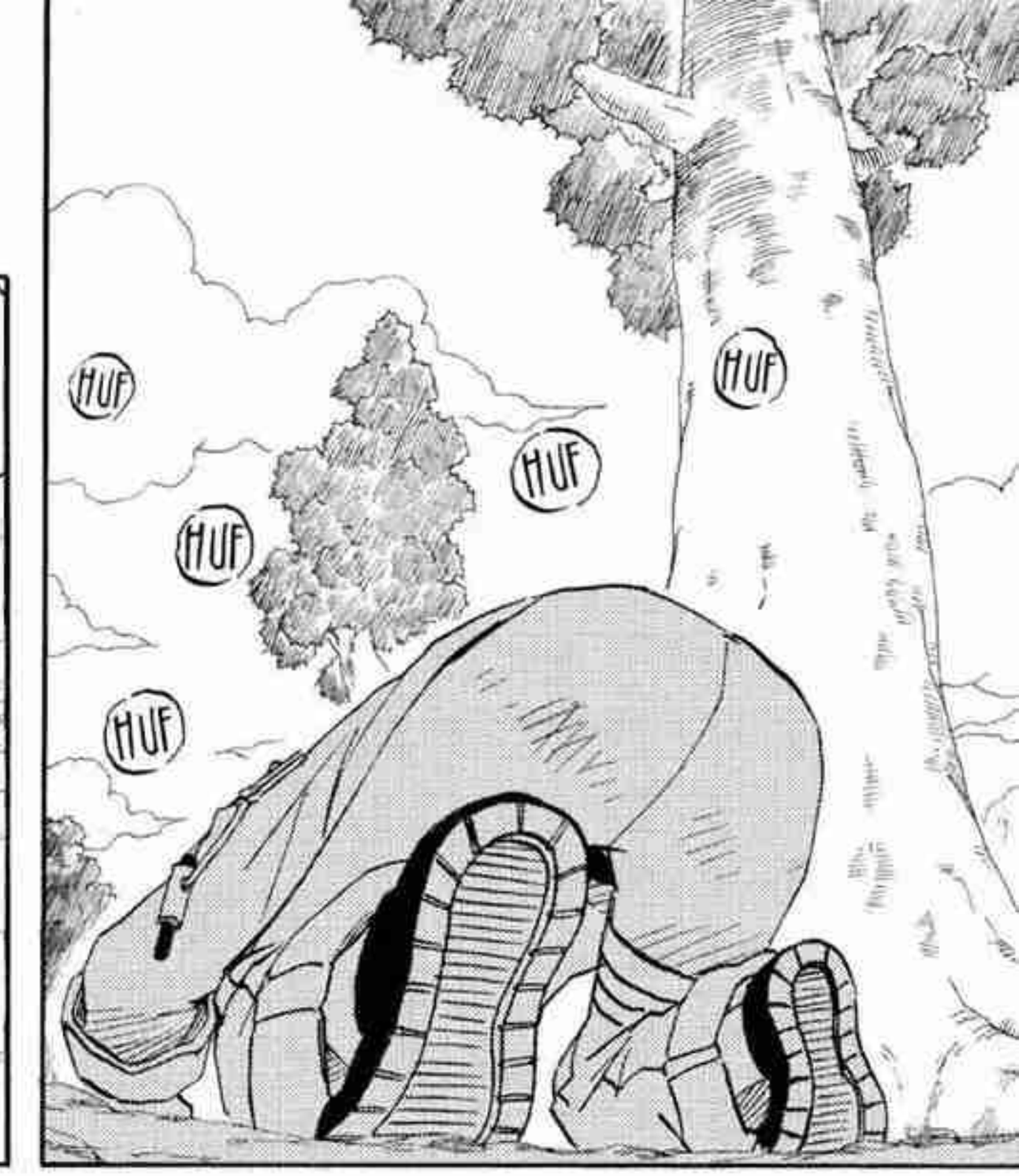
FLIT

FLIT

FLIT



...UNH... UGH...
OWW...


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

ROLL...
I GOTTA TAKE A BREAK...
TUMP

...I'M AT MY LIMIT... IT HURTS SO MUCH I CAN'T EVEN BUILD UP ANY CHAKRA!
THUDD

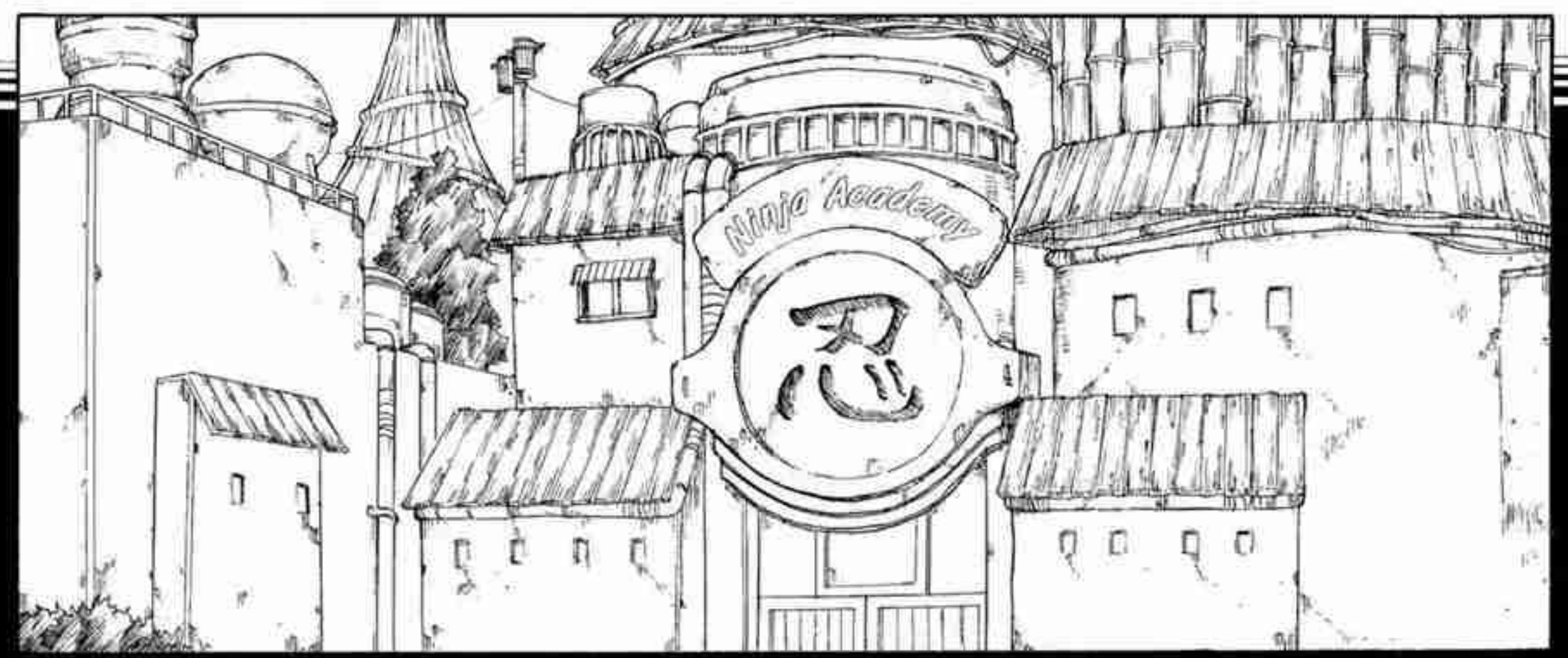
WHEEE

READ
THIS
WAY

...
MUF
MUF
MUF

MUF
MUF
TIP

!
MUF
FWP
MUF
MUF


Ninja Academy

ZZZ
ZZZ

MNCH
MNCH
KRNCH
KRNCH

HEY!
CLASS IS
STILL IN
SESSION!!
DASH

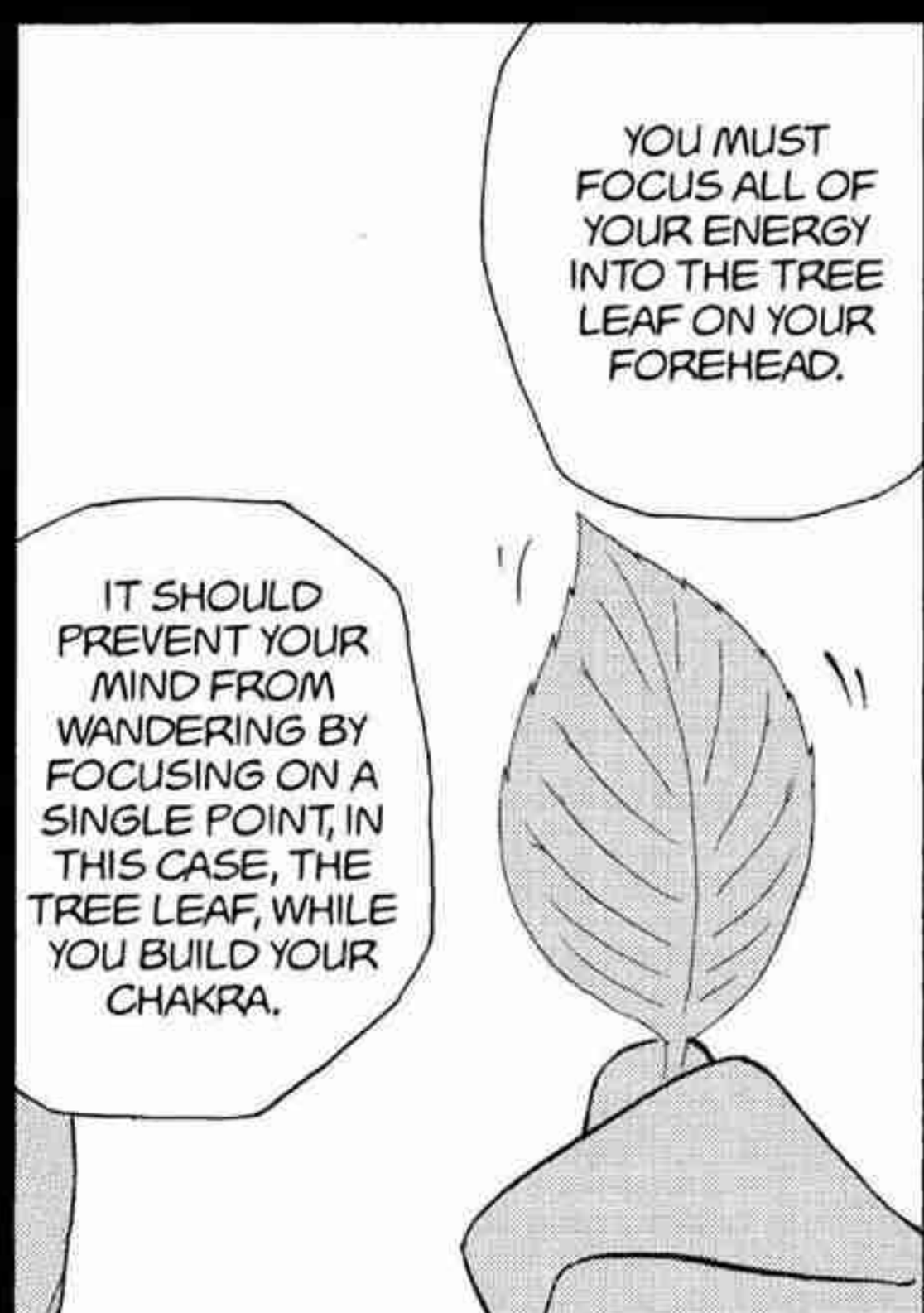
YAAAW...
YIP !!
BUT IT'S HARD SITTING STILL AT A DESK. RIGHT, AKAMARU?
MASTER, DO YOU MIND SHORTENING THE LECTURE ...?
YOU ALL HAVE ABSOLUTE ZERO CONCENTRATION!!
AT THIS RATE, YOU'LL NEVER BECOME UPSTANDING NINJA!

WHAT'S THIS?

WHAT ...?!!
FINE, BUT THAT MEANS AFTER CLASS, I'M GOING TO TEACH YOU A LESSON IN CONCEN-TRATION YOU WON'T SOON FORGET!

...IS A FOCUSING EXERCISE THAT OUR KONOHA PREDECESSORS PRACTICED EVERY DAY.
WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO LEARN...

HUH.


YOU MUST FOCUS ALL OF YOUR ENERGY INTO THE TREE LEAF ON YOUR FOREHEAD.
IT SHOULD PREVENT YOUR MIND FROM WANDERING BY FOCUSING ON A SINGLE POINT, IN THIS CASE, THE TREE LEAF, WHILE YOU BUILD YOUR CHAKRA.

?

IT'S STRONG NINJA THAT MAKE SPLENDID SHINOBI!

YEAH, RIGHT! YOU'RE MAKING THAT UP!

YEAH! HE'S RIGHT!

THIS IS WHY WE WEAR THE MARK OF THE LEAF ON OUR HEADBANDS.

ONLY HE WHO CAN CONCENTRATE WILL BECOME A SPLENDID SHINOBI!

UNH

SIGH...

...

I'M...SO STUPID SOME-TIMES...

WHUMP

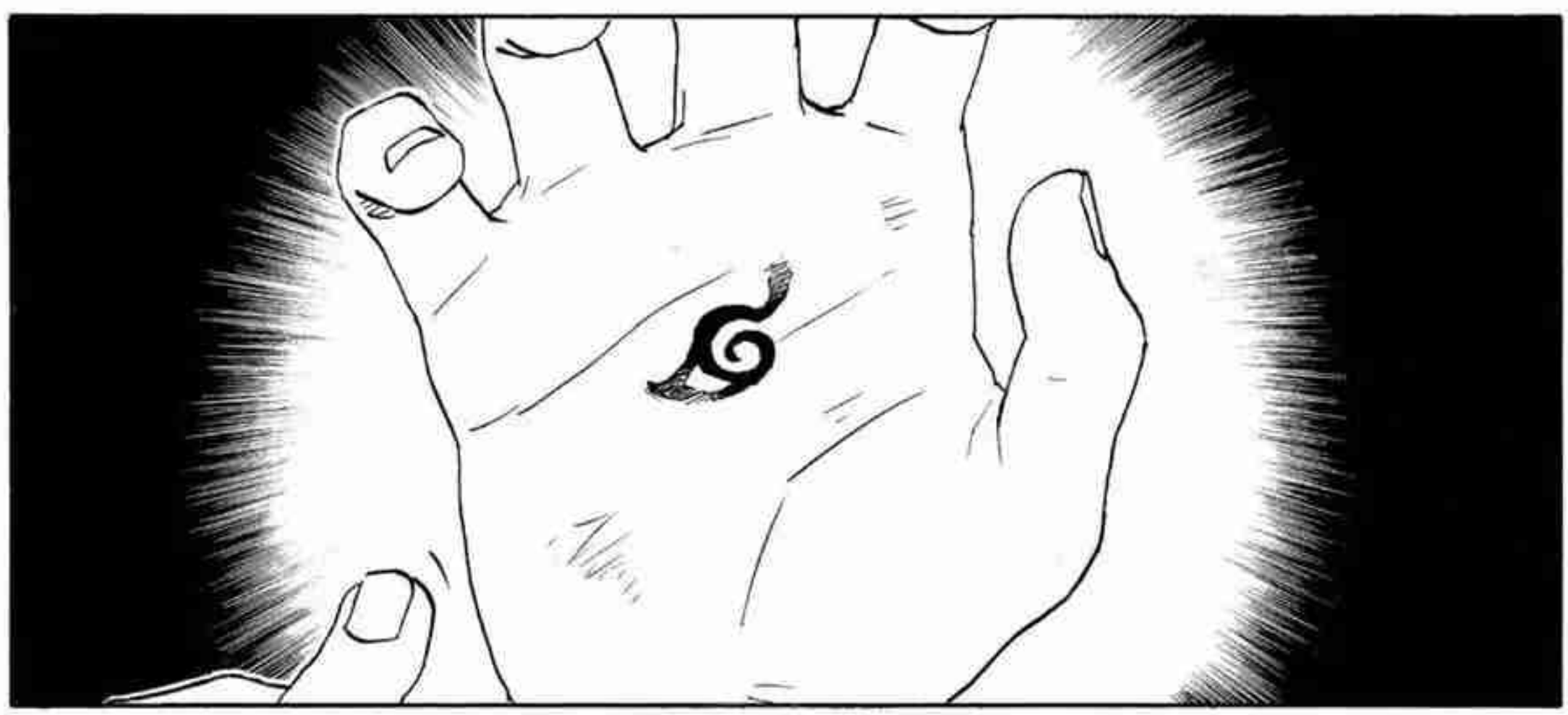
SIGH... I SHOULDA LISTENED MORE CLOSELY TO MASTER IRUKA...

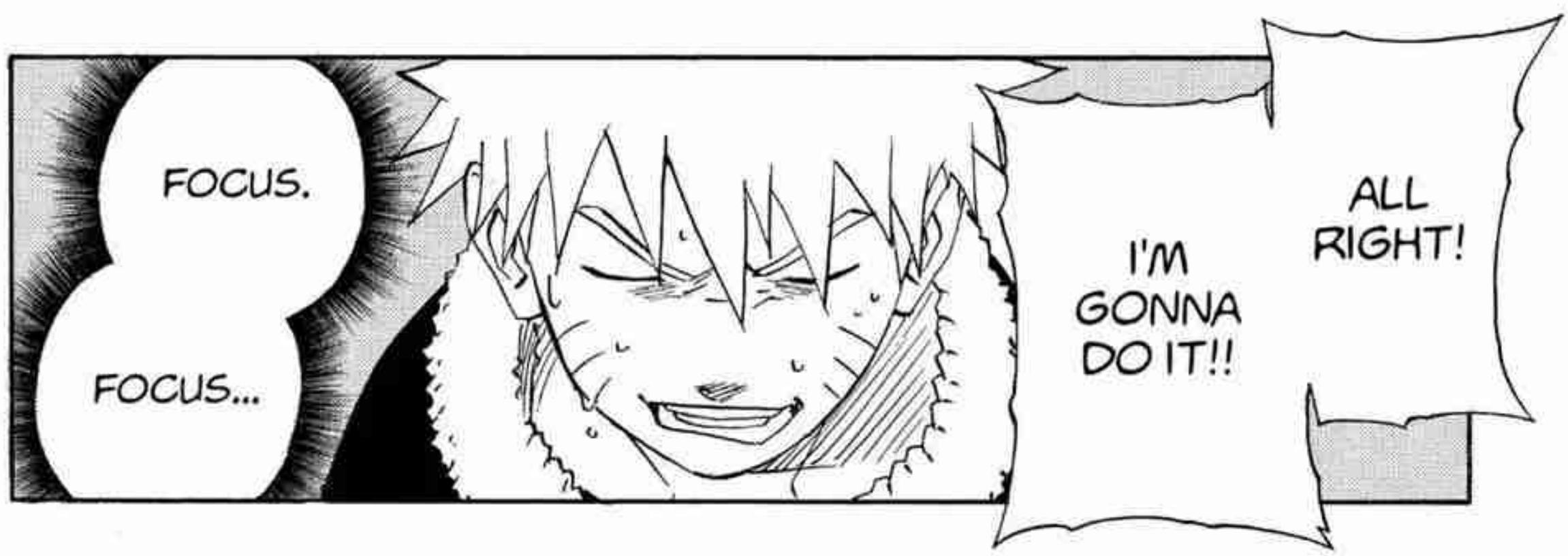
THIS...IS ACTUALLY A LOT LIKE...

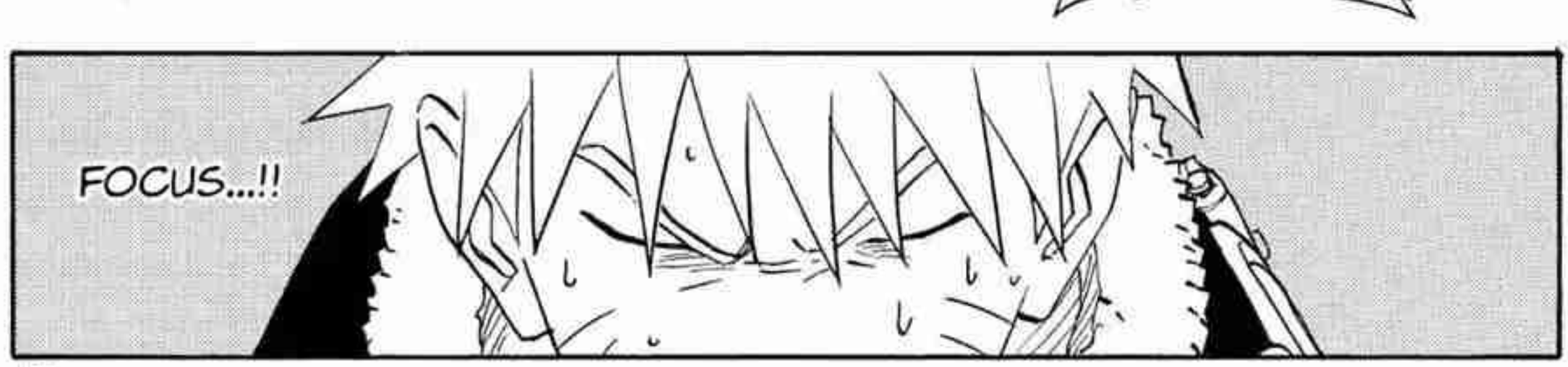
...

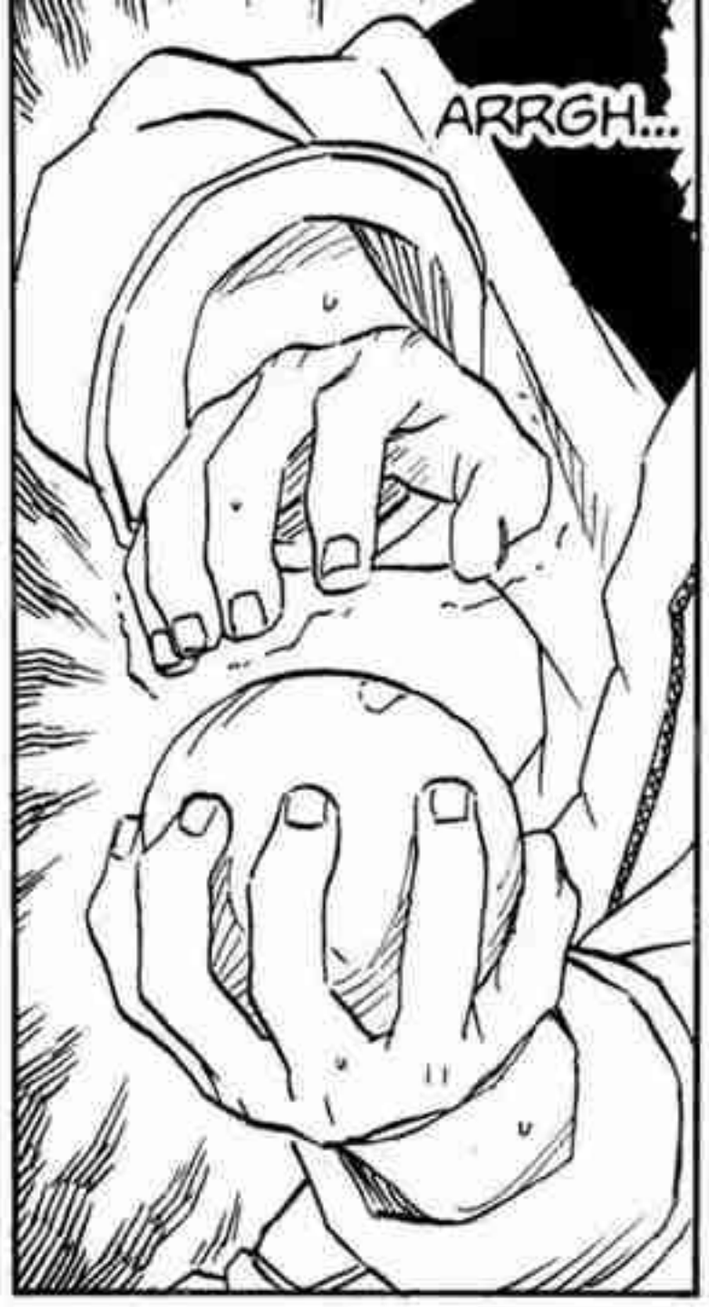
SCRITCH
SCRITCH

...BUT FEELING SORRY FOR MYSELF WON'T GET ME ANYWHERE!
SLRP

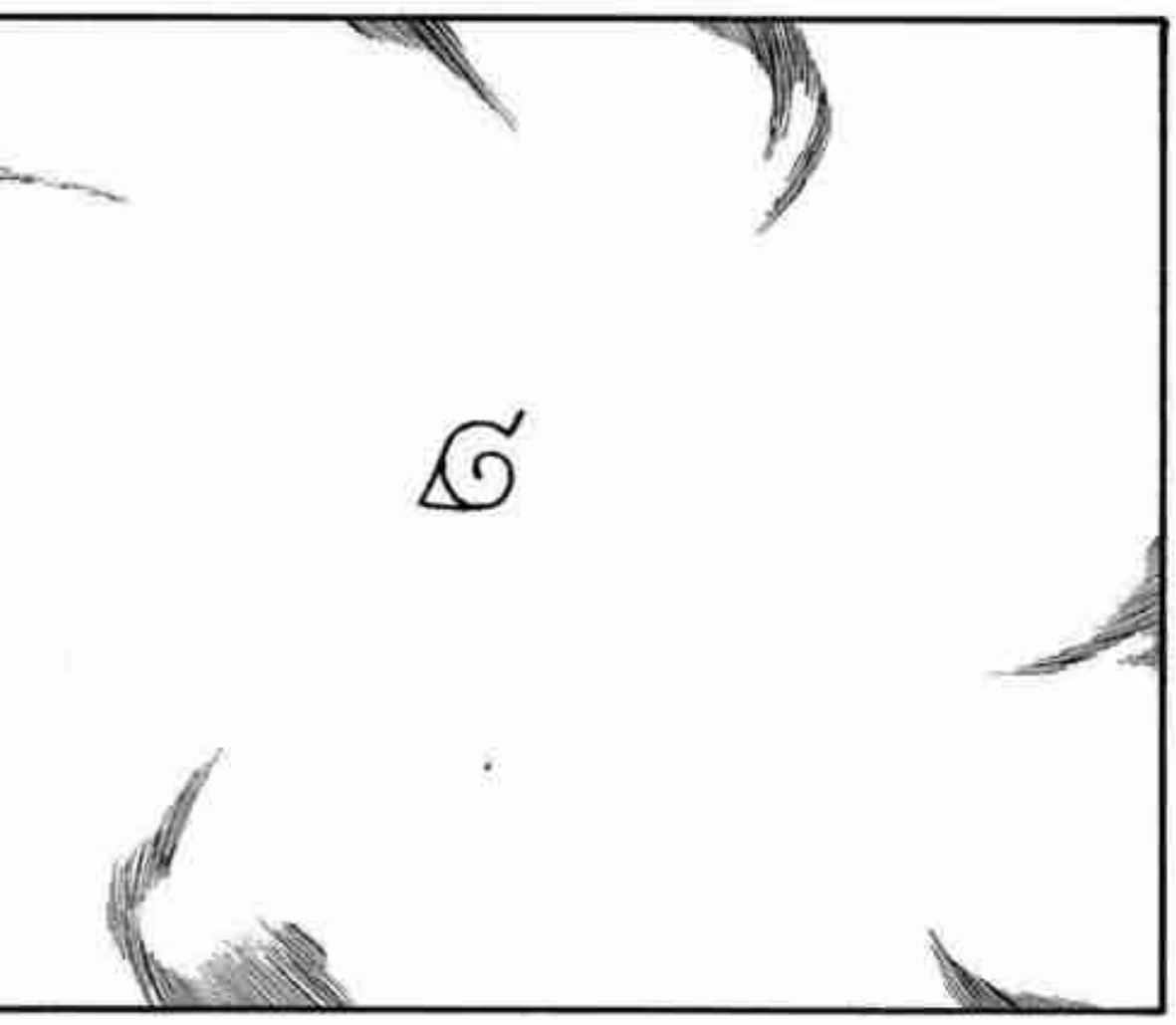



FOCUS.
FOCUS...
I'M GONNA DO IT!!
ALL RIGHT!


FOCUS...!!


ARRGH...

CLOP



ZWW...

NOW!!

OOOOOOOAR!!

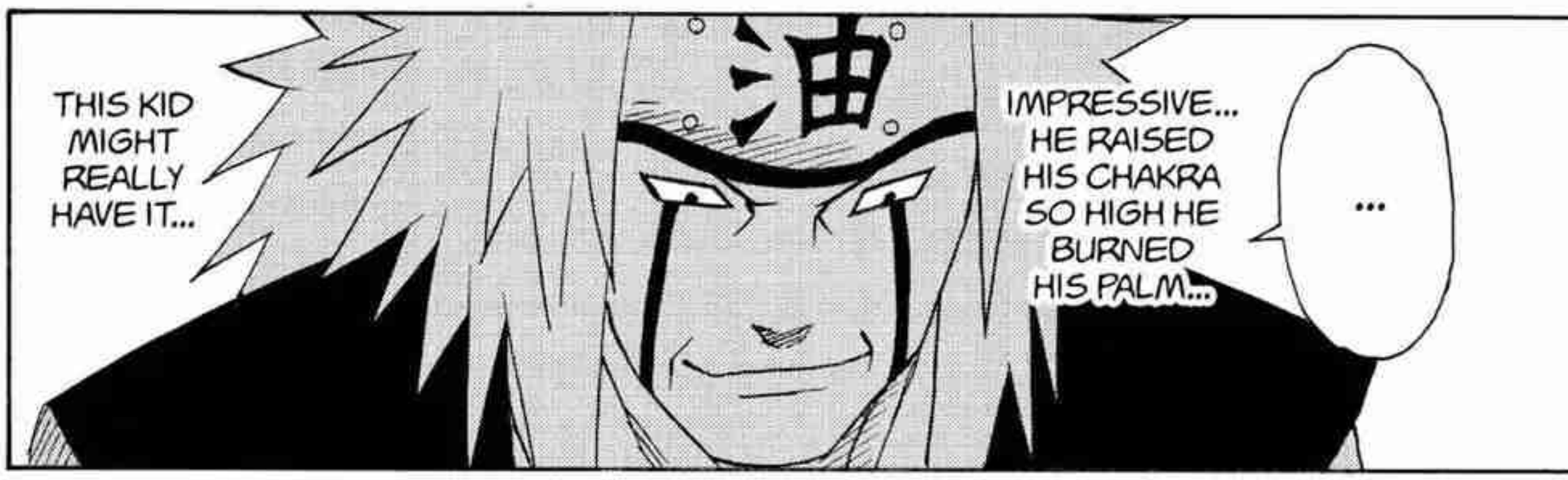
WHAP

WHOMP WHOMP WHOMP

ROOOOOOOOOOO

HUH, IT SURE LOOKS LIKE YOU CLEARED THE SECOND STATE.
UNH...I BROKE IT...!

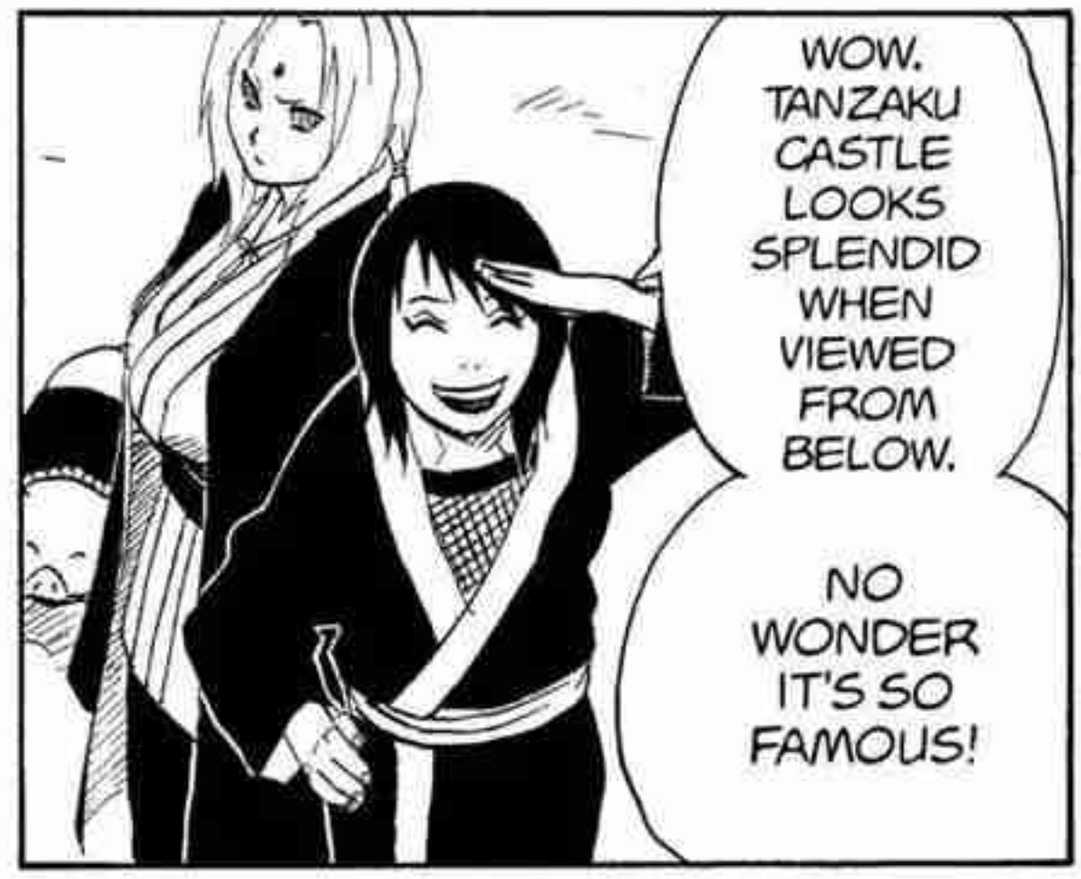
VOOSH...
FIZZ
SIZZ


THIS KID MIGHT REALLY HAVE IT...
油
IMPRESSIVE... HE RAISED HIS CHAKRA SO HIGH HE BURNED HIS PALM...
...

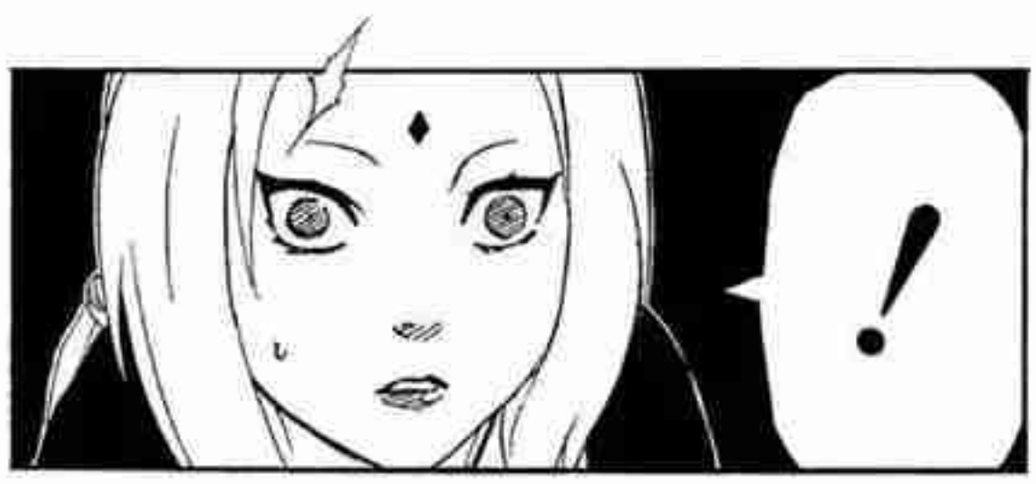
I'LL EXPLAIN THE THIRD STATE ON THE WAY.
NOW HOLD YOUR HORSES...
WE'RE GONNA GO MEET TSUNADE FIRST.

HURRY UP...AND SHOW ME THE THIRD STATE...
HUF
UNNH...
HUF
HUF

AWW, WHAT'S THE HURRY? LOOKING IS FREE.
CALM DOWN, SHIZUNE.
LET'S GET OUT OF THIS PLACE.


WOW. TANZAKU CASTLE LOOKS SPLENDID WHEN VIEWED FROM BELOW.
NO WONDER IT'S SO FAMOUS!

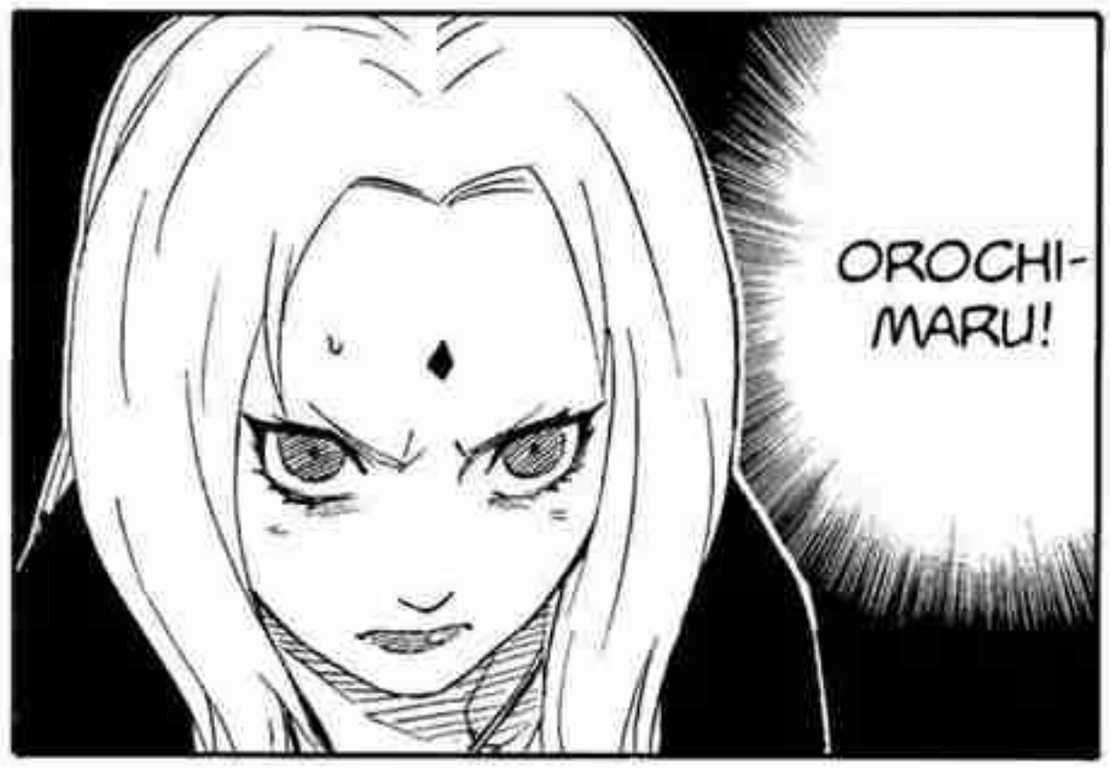
KA
BOO


!

!

KLAT KLATTER
KLAT KLATTER

SST


OROCHI-
MARU!

THAT'S...!

FOUND
YOU!

THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
MY PERSONAL HISTORY, PART 27-A

SO I HAD FINALLY WON *WEEKLY SHONEN JUMP'S* NEWCOMER'S AWARD, WHICH HAD BEEN MY DEAREST DESIRE, AND TOOK ONE GIANT LEAP FORWARD TOWARD BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL MANGA ARTIST. I WAS ASSIGNED A PERSONAL EDITOR AND I RECEIVED 200,000 YEN [ABOUT $2,000] IN PRIZE MONEY, SO I WAS FLOATING ON AIR. FIRST, I DECIDED TO PUT ASIDE AND SAVE THE ENTIRE AMOUNT OF THE PRIZE PURSE. AT THE TIME, I WAS THE PROVERBIAL STARVING STUDENT ARTIST WHO HAD SO LITTLE MONEY THAT I WOULD SQUEEZE OUT AND USE EVERY LAST DROP OF PAINT IN THE TUBE.

IN PARTICULAR, MY FAVORITE COBALT BLUE OIL PAINT... THAT SURE WAS EXPENSIVE! IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, EACH TUBE COST ABOUT 2,000 YEN [ABOUT $20]...

BECAUSE THE SUPER-FRUGAL ME WOULD MAKE THE COBALT BLUE GO FURTHER BY THINNING IT WITH ADDITIONAL OIL, THERE STARTED TO BE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN COLOR DENSITY BETWEEN MY PAINTINGS AND THOSE OF MY BOURGEOIS CLASSMATES WHO JUST SLATHERED IT ON. IT GOT TO A POINT WHERE MY ART INSTRUCTOR WOULD REGULARLY SCOLD ME, *"TOO LIGHT!"* OR *"YOU NEED TO GIVE IT A HEAVIER, MORE OPPRESSIVE FEELING, YATTA YATTA."* ON TOP OF IT ALL, HE'D SAY, *"ARE YOU SLACKING?"* OR *"YOU OUGHT TO TAKE MORE TIME WITH IT, AND USE MANY MORE COLORS. YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH COLORS!"* THAT INSTRUCTOR DEFINITELY DIDN'T TAKE HIS STUDENTS' WALLET CONTENTS INTO CONSIDERATION...

I WANTED TO SHOUT BACK, I CAN'T HELP IT IF I CAN'T AFFORD MORE PAINT TUBES! BUT ACTUALLY, AT THAT POINT I DIDN'T REALLY CARE ANYMORE...THAT'S BECAUSE THE CONSTANTLY MONEY-GOBBLING OIL PAINTING BUSINESS HAD LOST ITS APPEAL, AND I WAS ALSO TIRED OF THE WHINING, HIGH-NOSED ART WORLD. I'D RATHER SPEND WHAT PRECIOUS MONEY I HAD ON THE MOVIES, WHICH MIGHT HELP ME DRAW MANGA... AND THUS, I DECIDED TO SPEND ALL MY MONEY ON MOVIES AND VIDEOS.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Number 155: The Third State

油

ALL RIGHT, LET'S GO!

...

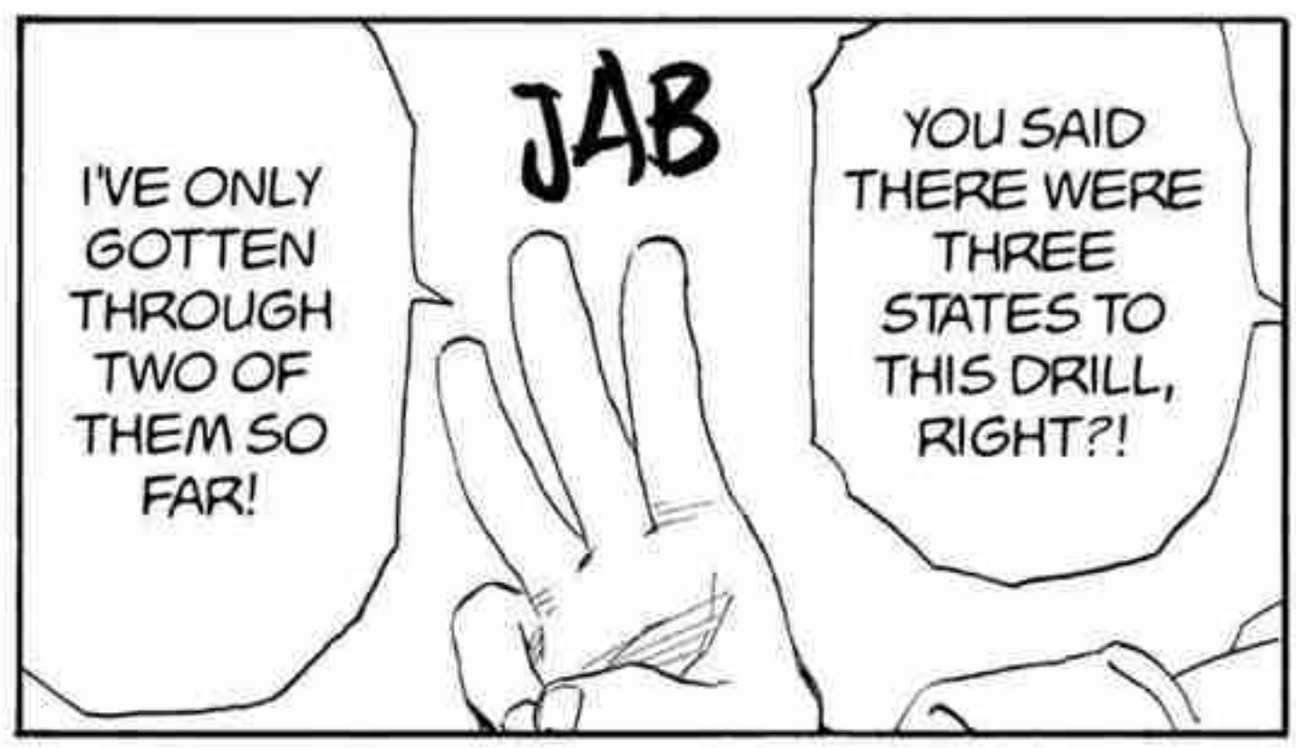
HUH...?

YOU'RE IN A FOUL MOOD...

...QUIT ACTING LIKE A LITTLE KID. LET'S GO, PULEEZ.

YOU CAN PRACTICE THE THIRD STATE EVEN WHILE WALKING.
HO HO HO...
SRCH SRCH
REALLY?!
HUH?!

I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF TRAIN-ING!!
WELL! WHY NOT?


I'VE ONLY GOTTEN THROUGH TWO OF THEM SO FAR!
JAB
YOU SAID THERE WERE THREE STATES TO THIS DRILL, RIGHT?!

PWUUU

!
PONK
HERE.

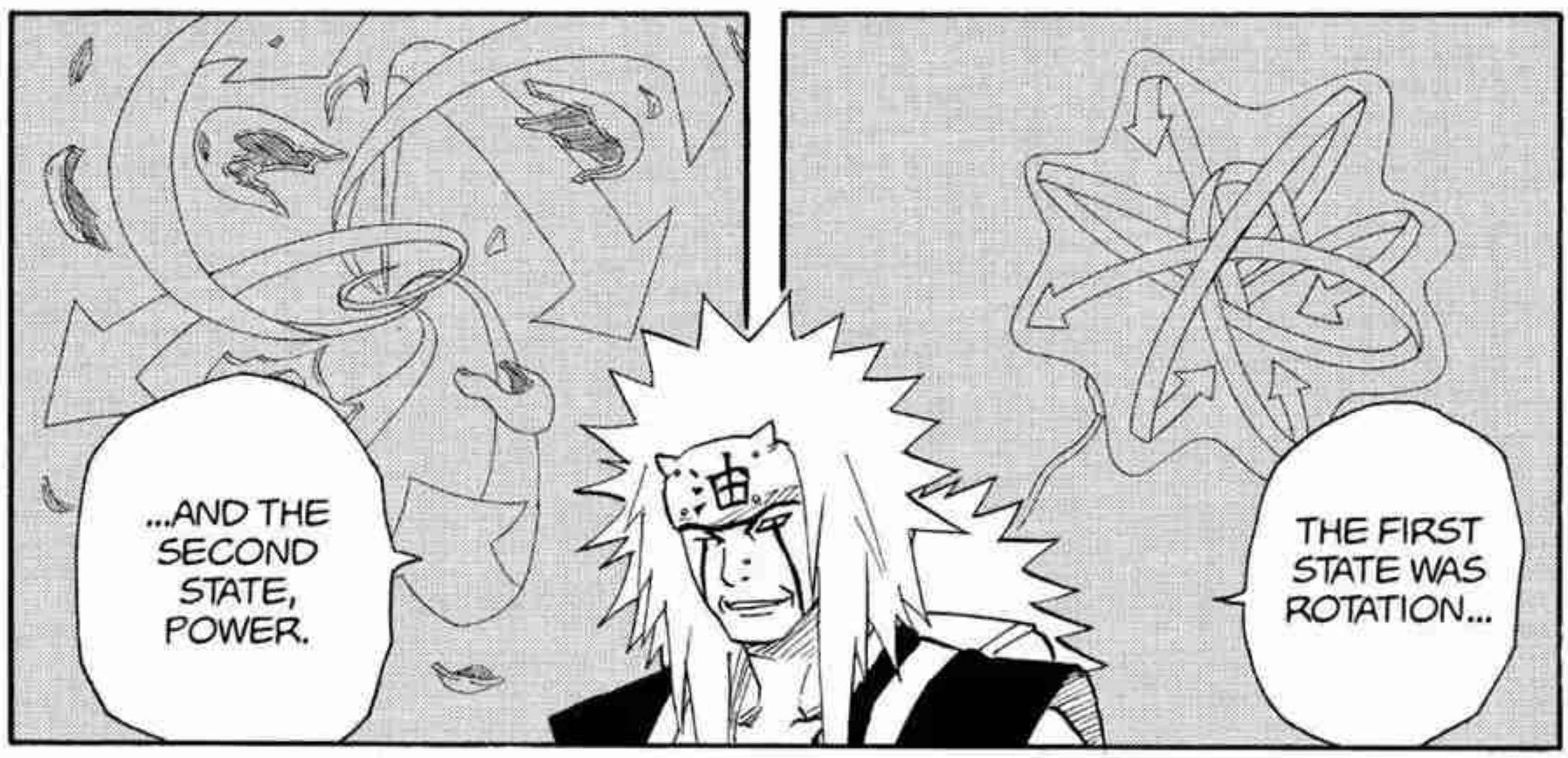
A BAL-LOON?
?!

CLAP

HUH?

WHAT'S THIS...AN ORDINARY BALLOON...?

BOINN



READ THIS WAY
...
WAIT... WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO BE SEEING?!!
...
HAPPENING INSIDE THE BALLOON, YOU ASK?
SO WHAT'S...
KURU
PLMP
BUT LET ME SHOW YOU WITH MY LEFT HAND WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON!
ON FIRST GLANCE, IT MAY LOOK LIKE I'M JUST HOLDING THE BALLOON IN MY HAND...
HO HO HO...
!

SHWRRR

YET IT'S STAYING IN A CIRCLE... IT'S LIKE...
...WHOA, HIS CHAKRA IS SWIRLING FASTER AND FASTER...!

油
...A MINI-CYCLONE!

WOW...
GULP

...INSIDE THE BALLOON IN YOUR RIGHT HAND?
...AND THE SAME THING'S GOING ON...
YUP!

...IN THE THIRD STATE, YOU PUT OUT EVERYTHING YOU'VE LEARNED SO FAR FULL FORCE, AND THEN...
SO YOU SEE...

...EVEN THOUGH THE CHAKRA'S MORE POWERFUL AND ROTATING FASTER THAN WHEN HE BURST THE RUBBER BALL!
HE'S TURNING SO MUCH CHAKRA, BUT THE BALLOON DOESN'T EVEN MOVE...

...CONTAIN IT!

...YOU FORM AN ADDITIONAL LAYER ON THE INSIDE OF THE BALLOON...

AND VISUALIZE COMPRESSING THE CHAKRA WITHIN.

IN SHORT, WHILE YOU MAXIMIZE YOUR CHAKRA'S ROTATION AND POWER...

...

HEH HEH...!

HEY NOW! YOU CAUGHT ON QUICK THIS TIME!

SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS KEEP THE SAME ROTATIONS I HAD IN THE SECOND STATE...

I GET IT!

...BUT INSTEAD OF BURSTING THE BALLOON, I NEED TO FOCUS ON NOT BREAKING IT!

WELL.

TWRL

WATCH CLOSELY! UP THROUGH THE SECOND STATE, THIS IS WHAT YOU CAN DO...

PLOP

...HMM ...?

...SO WHY DO I NEED TO LEARN HOW TO DO THAT?!

...HMPH.

SHF

SURRRL

FLASH

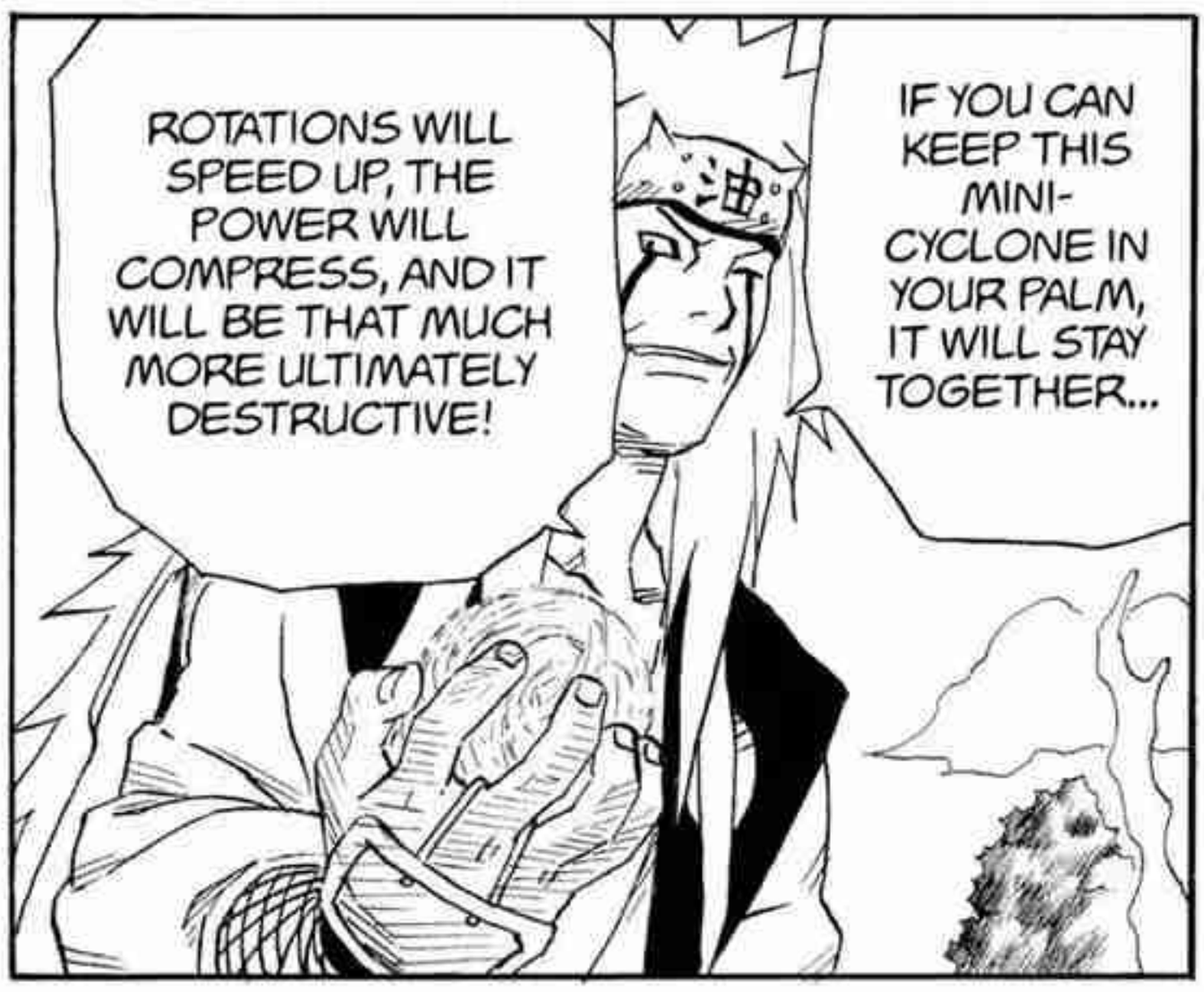
HAH!!

NOW, IF YOU MASTER THE THIRD STATE!
SHF
PFFT
...WHOA!

!
SUNRRRRL

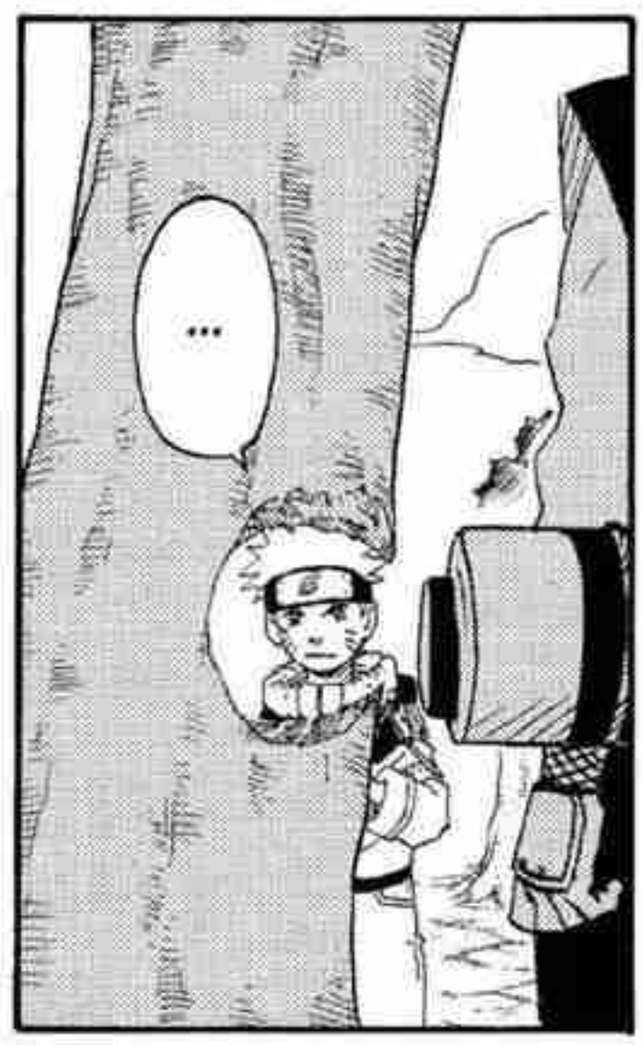
GZ

PSSST


ROTATIONS WILL SPEED UP, THE POWER WILL COMPRESS, AND IT WILL BE THAT MUCH MORE ULTIMATELY DESTRUCTIVE!
IF YOU CAN KEEP THIS MINI-CYCLONE IN YOUR PALM, IT WILL STAY TOGETHER...

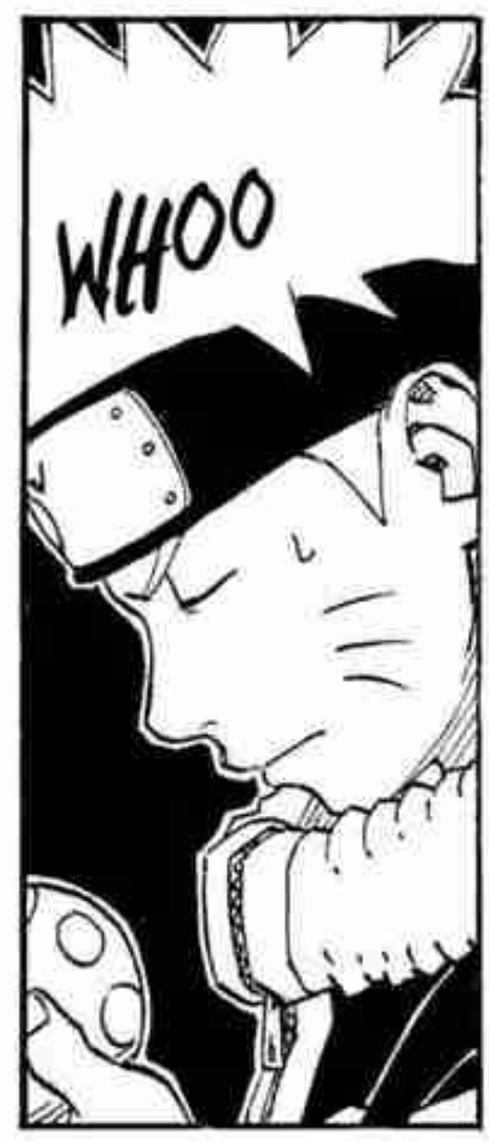
...!

ALL RIGHT! I CAN DO THIS...!


...

WHOMP
...NOW!
WHOMP
WHOMP

FEELS GOOD...


WHOO

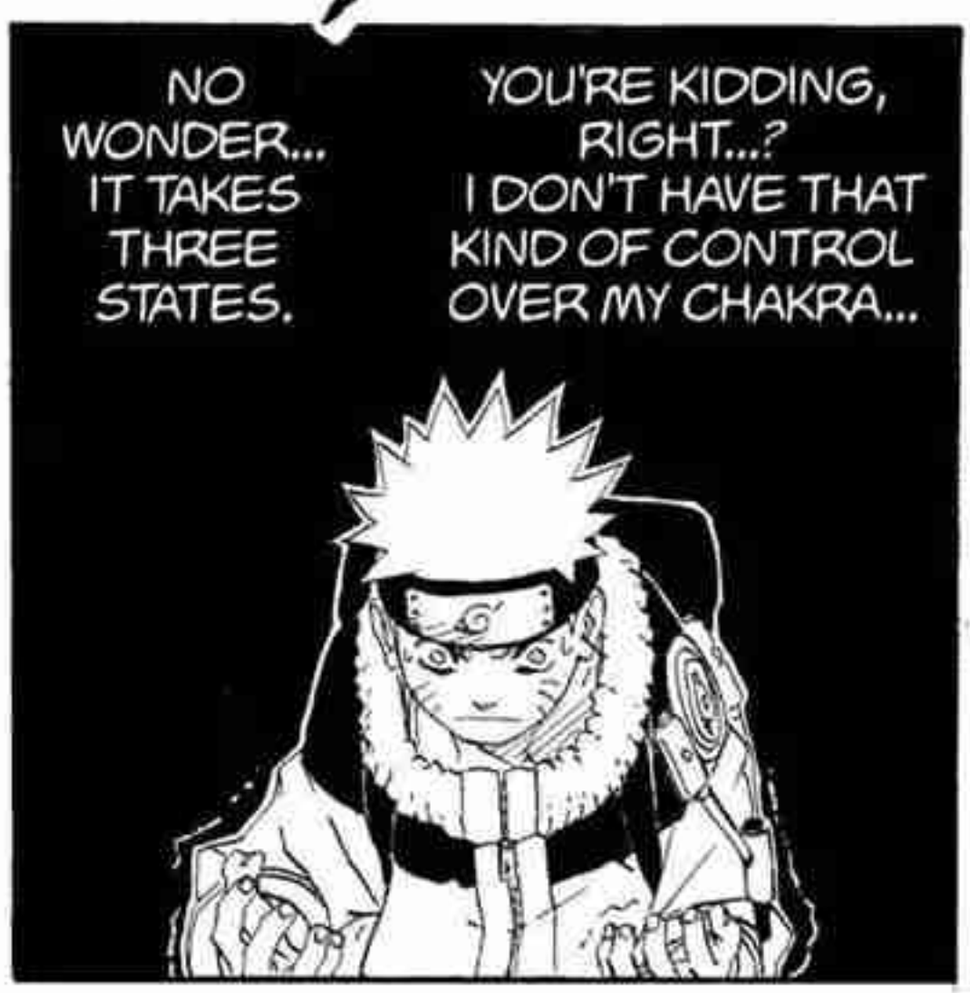
NOW CONTAIN IT!!

CONTAIN...

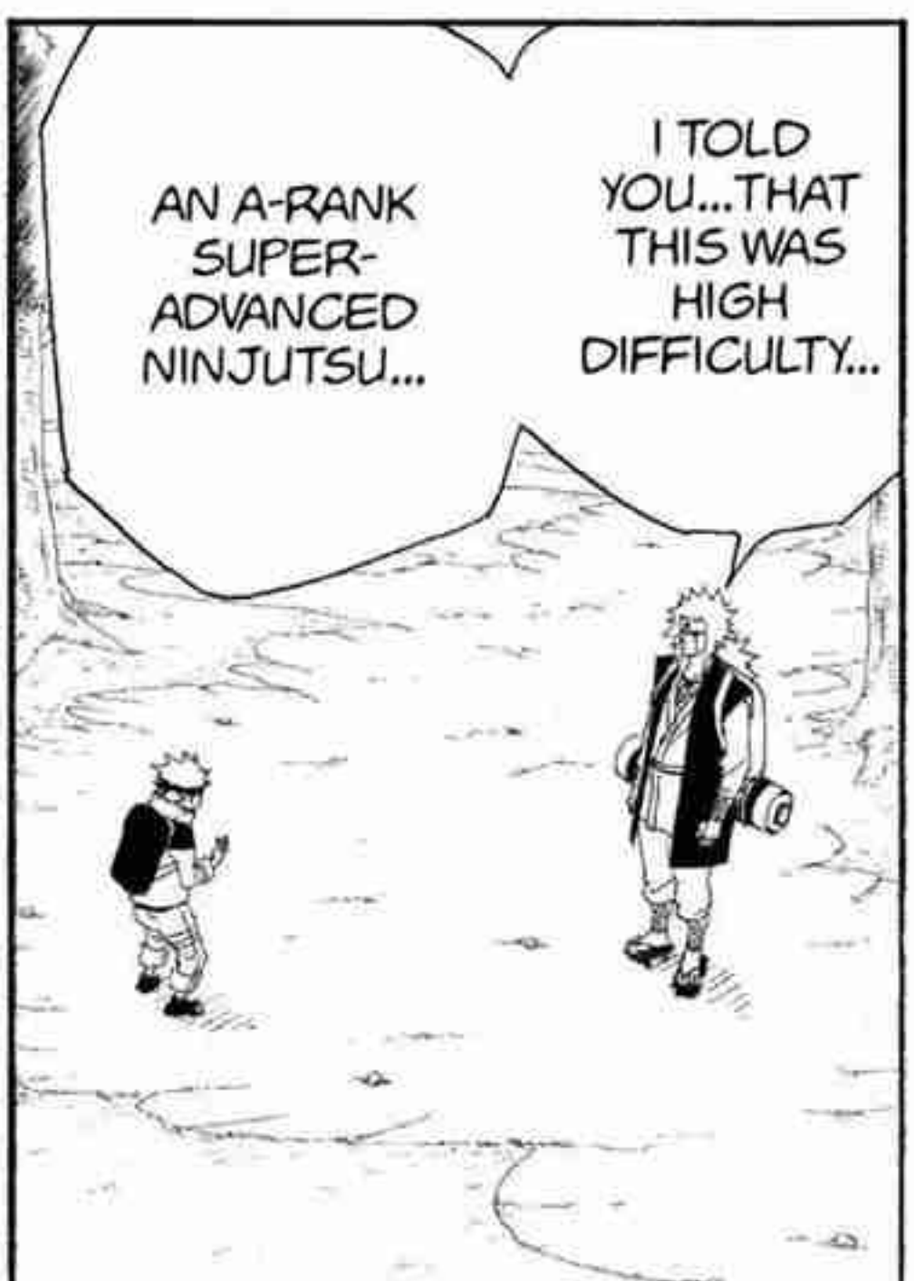
TWITCH
TWITCH

TWITCH
TWITCH

PUP


NO WONDER... IT TAKES THREE STATES.
YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT...? I DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF CONTROL OVER MY CHAKRA...

YOU HAVE TO CONTAIN THE POWER WHILE ROTATING FULL FORCE!
NO, NO HOLDING BACK!

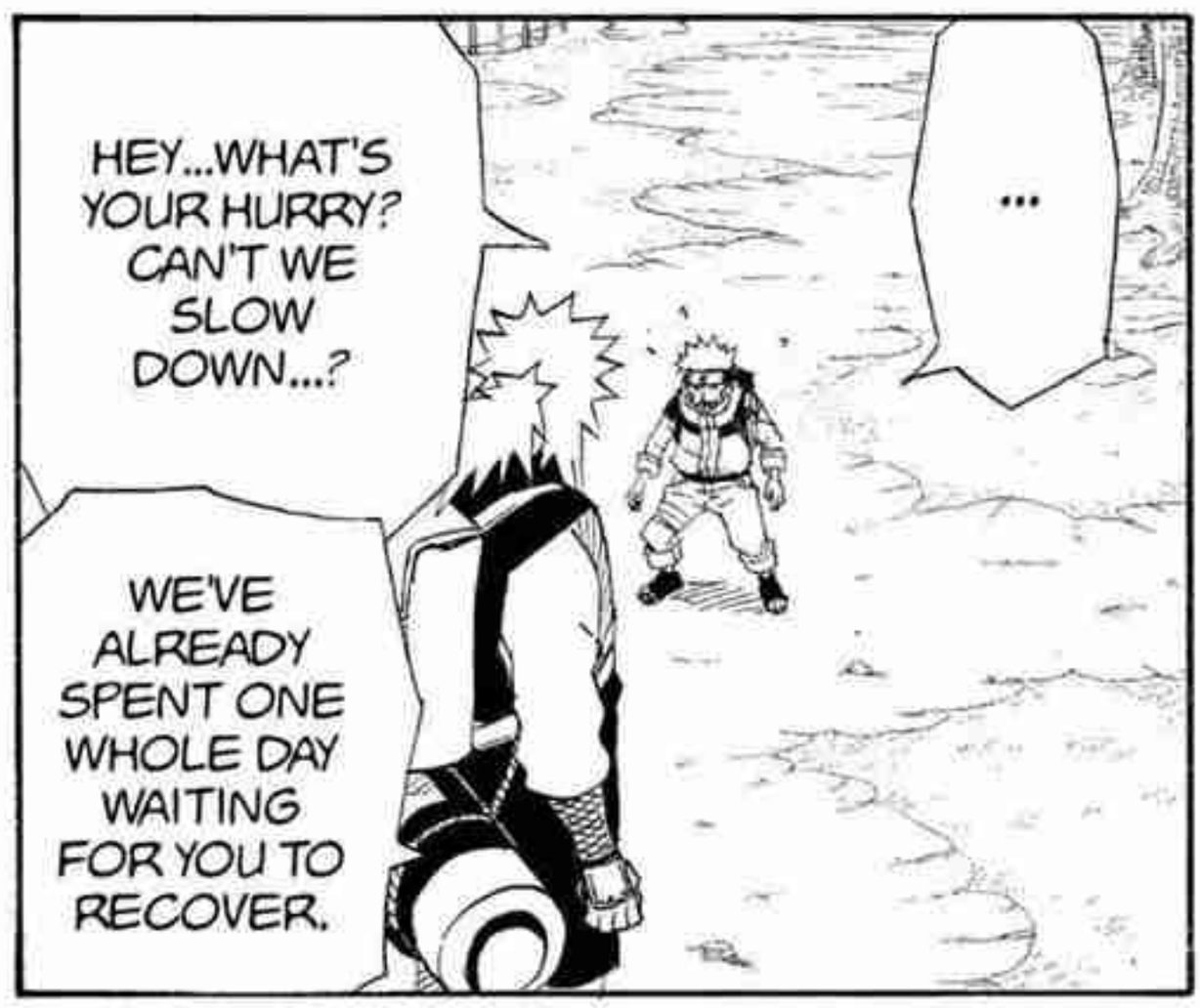

AN A-RANK SUPER-ADVANCED NINJUTSU...
I TOLD YOU...THAT THIS WAS HIGH DIFFICULTY...

THIS IS ON A TOTALLY DIFFERENT SCALE THAN THE OTHER TWO...

GO AHEAD AND TRY IT WHILE WE WALK.
NOW, NO MORE SHOP TALK!

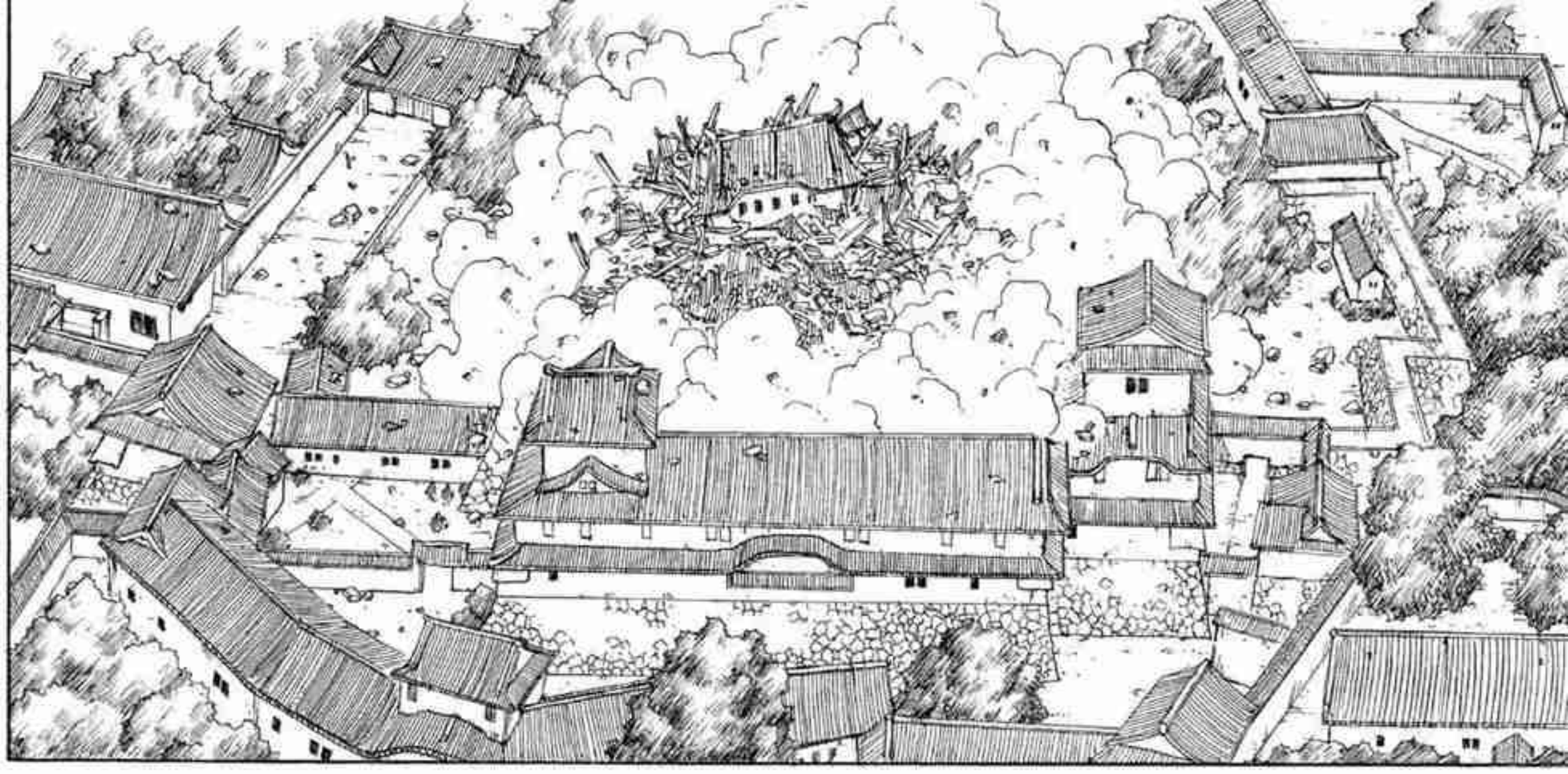
...

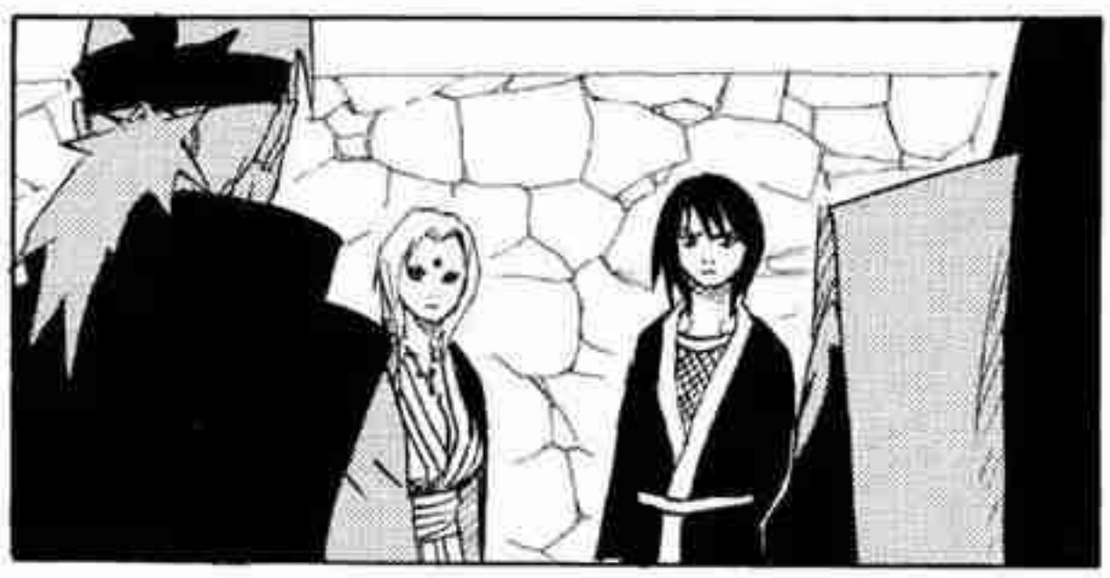
HEY...!!
THERE'S NO GUARANTEE TSUNADE'S GONNA STICK AROUND THAT TOWN.
KRNCH
WHRL

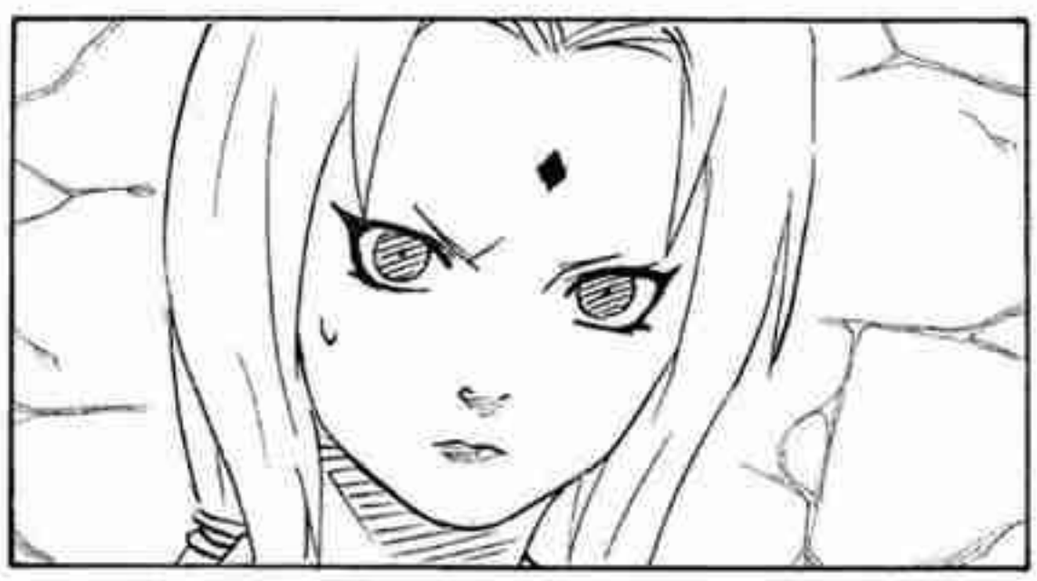

HEY...WHAT'S YOUR HURRY? CAN'T WE SLOW DOWN...?
...
WE'VE ALREADY SPENT ONE WHOLE DAY WAITING FOR YOU TO RECOVER.

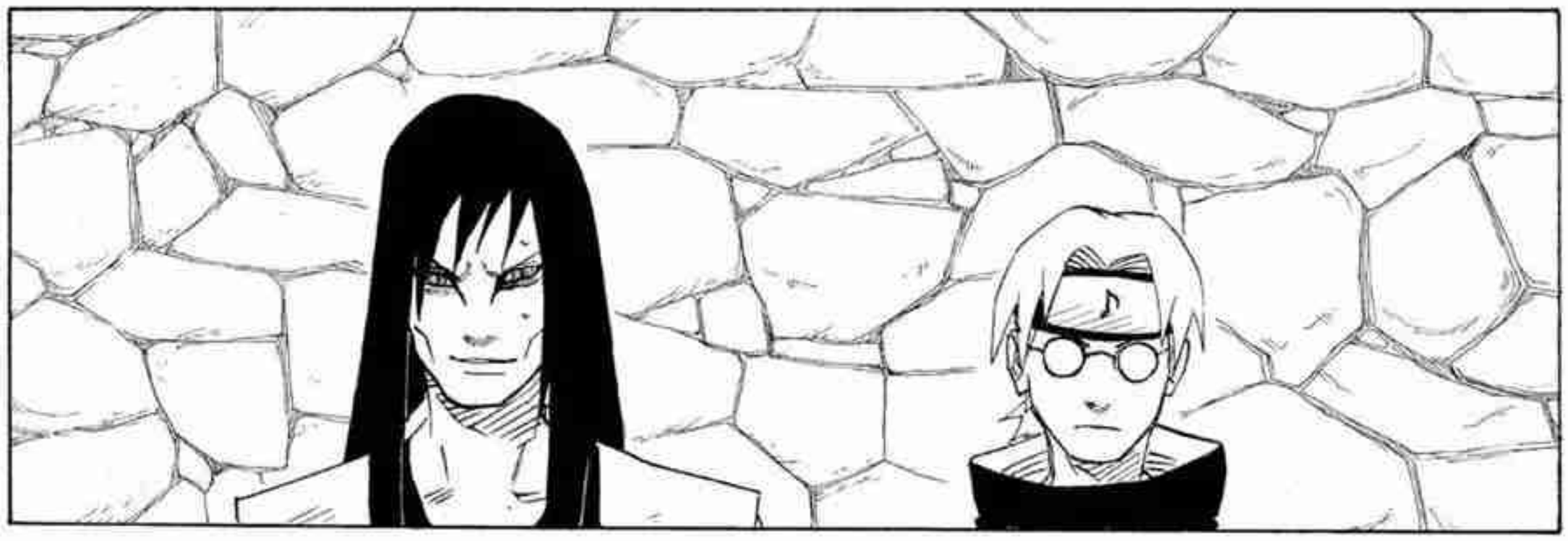
AW, ALL RIGHT...
...

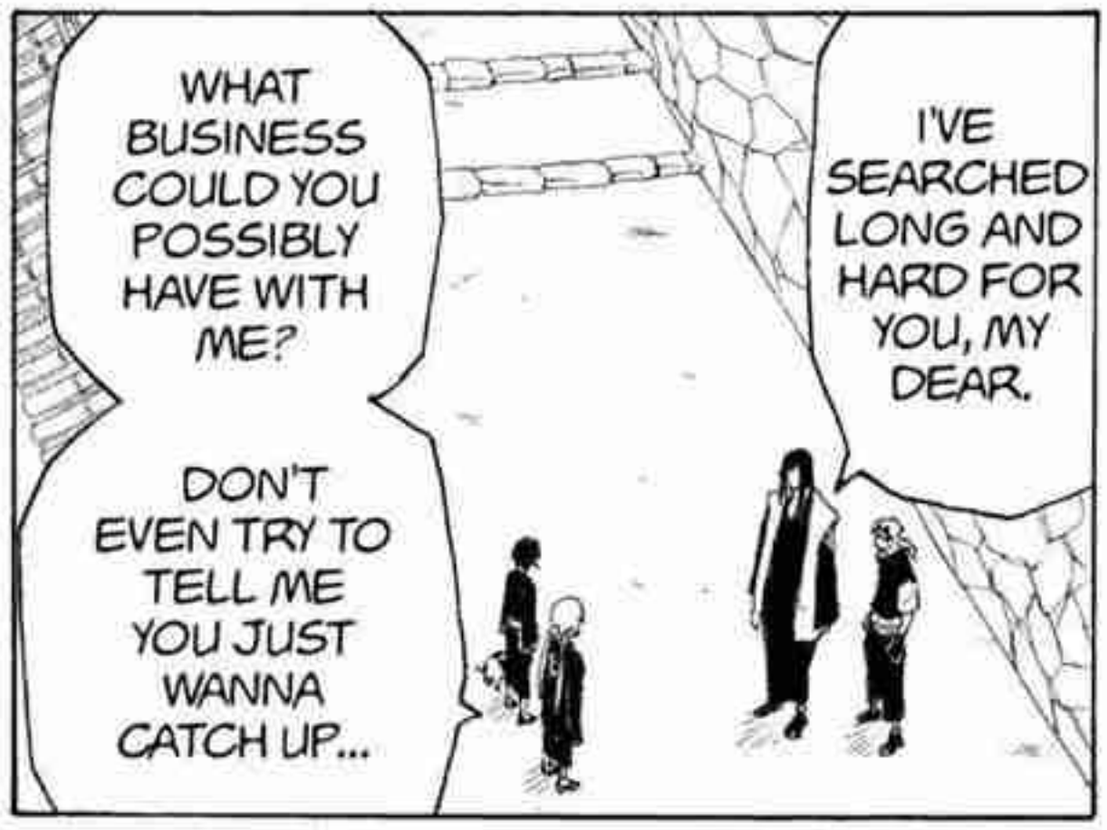
LET'S GO!
IT'S NOT LIKE AN OLD FRIEND'S GONNA CONVENIENTLY SHOW UP AND CHAT HER UP ABOUT THE OLD DAYS...



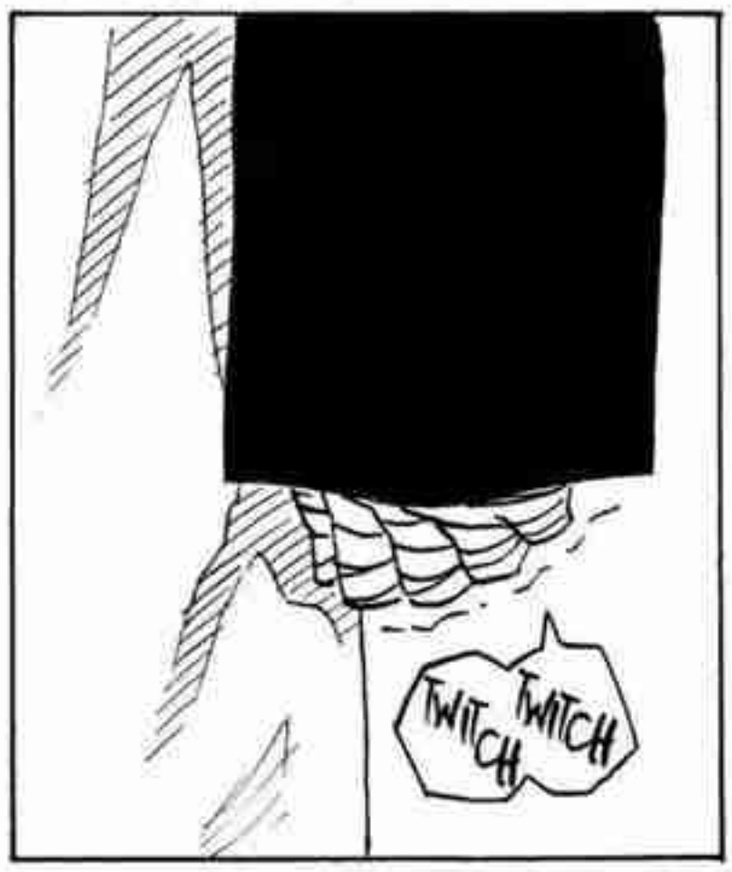


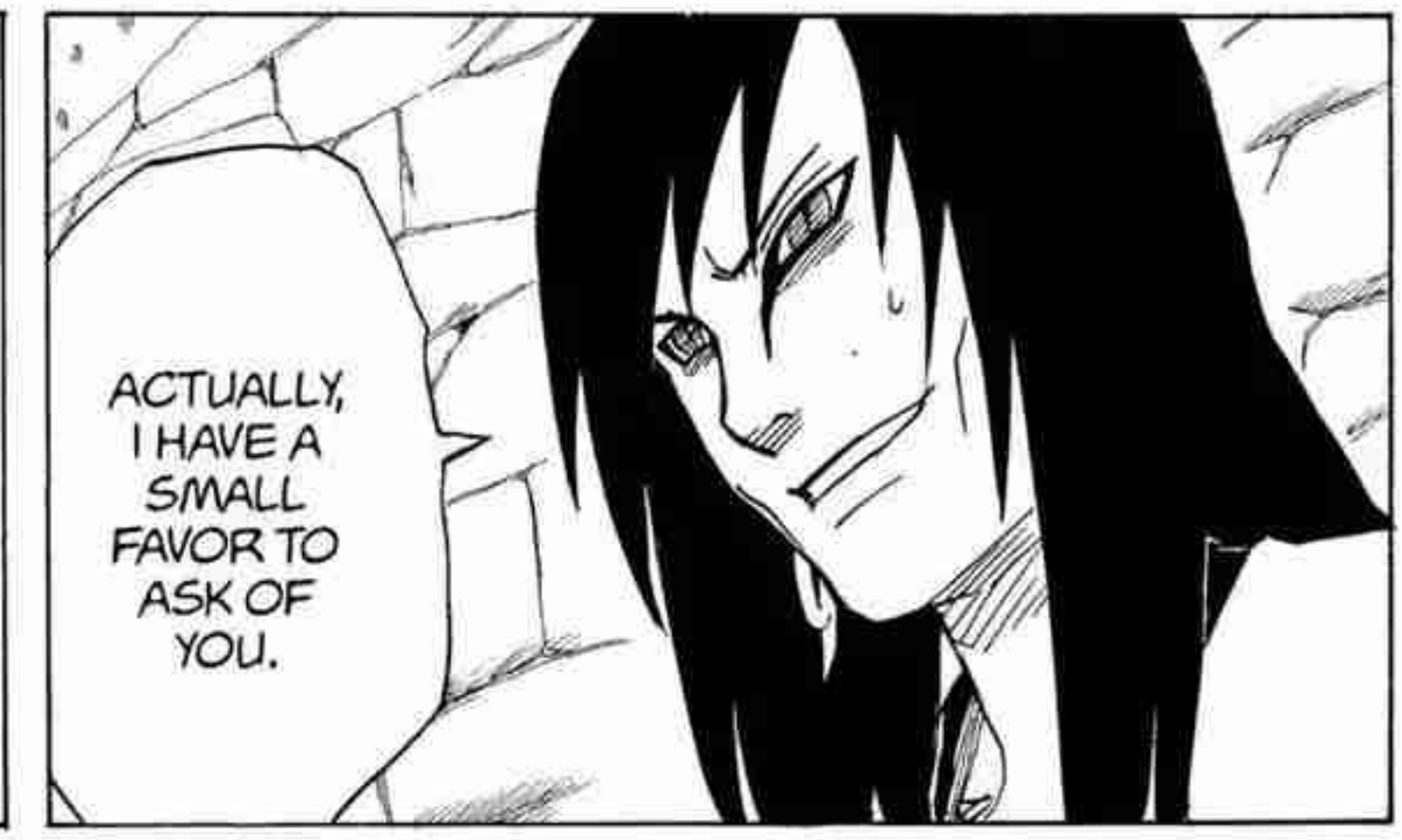





WHAT BUSINESS COULD YOU POSSIBLY HAVE WITH ME?
DON'T EVEN TRY TO TELL ME YOU JUST WANNA CATCH UP...
I'VE SEARCHED LONG AND HARD FOR YOU, MY DEAR.

OROCHI-MARU.
LONG TIME NO SEE...


TWITCH
TWITCH

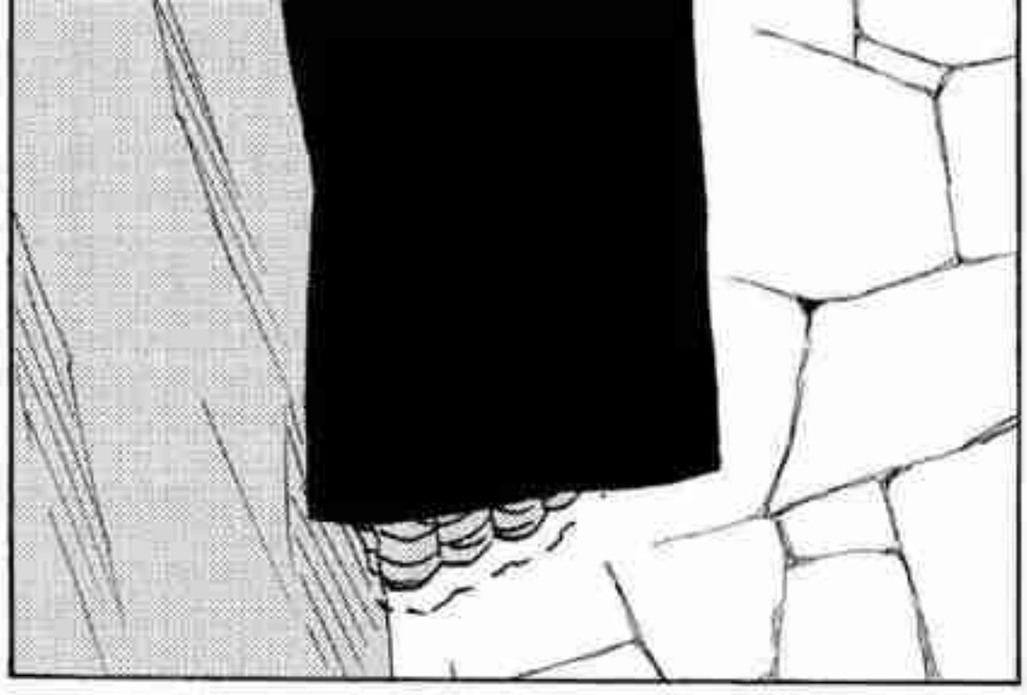

ACTUALLY, I HAVE A SMALL FAVOR TO ASK OF YOU.

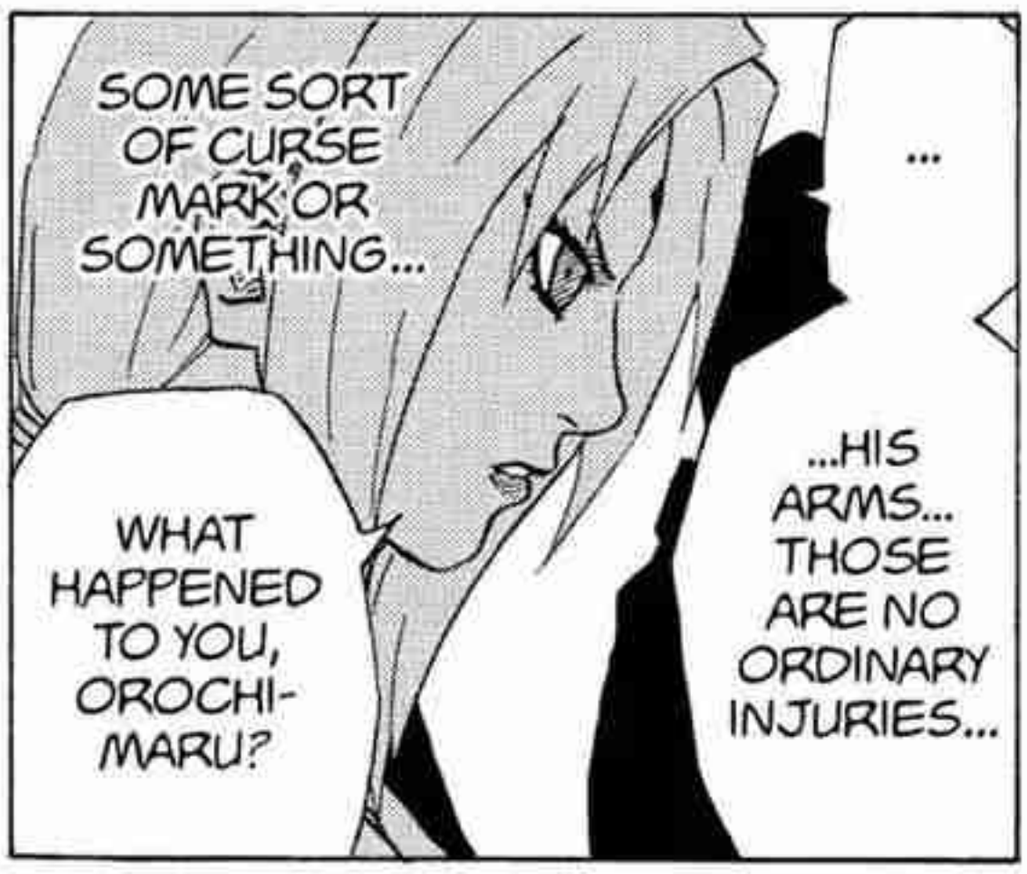
HIS HEART RATE'S ERRATIC... FROM HIS COMPLEXION, HE HAS A HIGH FEVER AND HE'S BEEN IN A STATE OF EXHAUSTION FOR A WHILE... AND HIS ARMS...
...

I QUIT MEDICINE A LONG TIME AGO.
GO ASK SOMEONE ELSE.

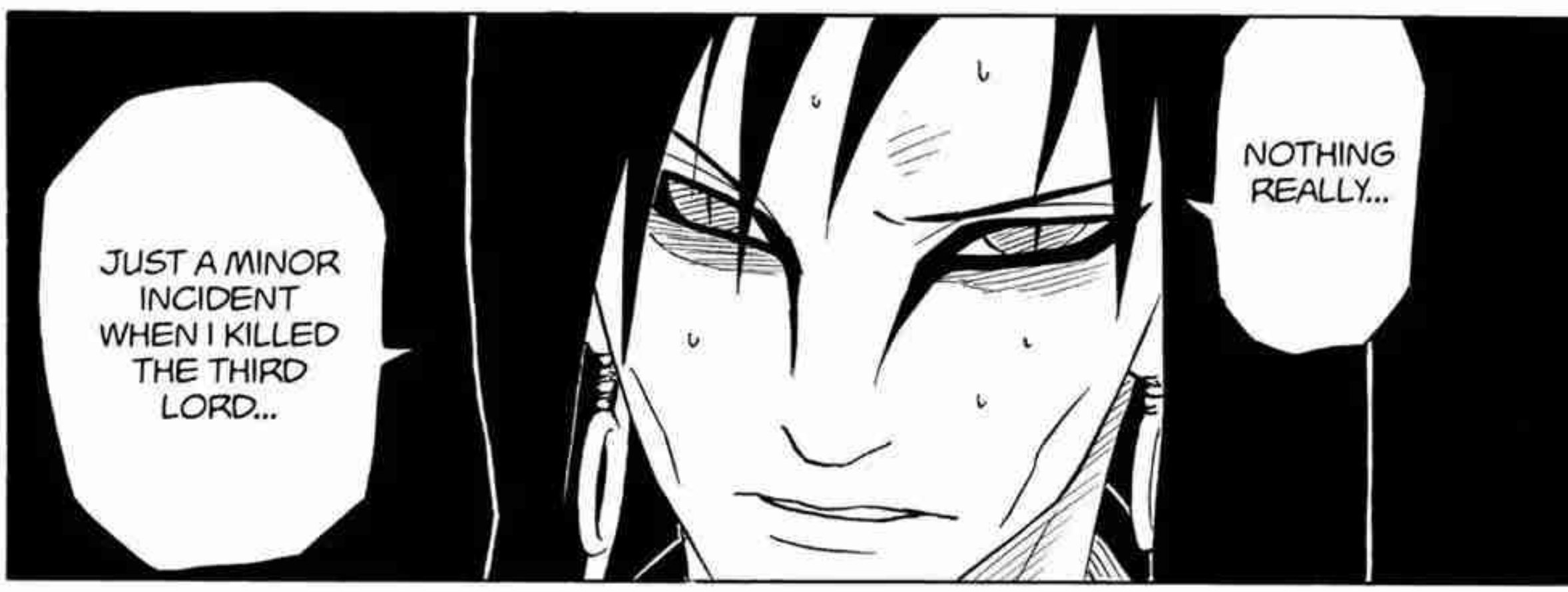
LADY TSUNADE... YOU PROBABLY ALREADY KNOW.

NO ONE ELSE CAN HEAL HIS ARMS.
BUT WE CANNOT... YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THE SEVERITY OF HIS WOUNDS...




SOME SORT OF CURSE MARK OR SOMETHING...
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, OROCHI-MARU?
...
...HIS ARMS... THOSE ARE NO ORDINARY INJURIES...

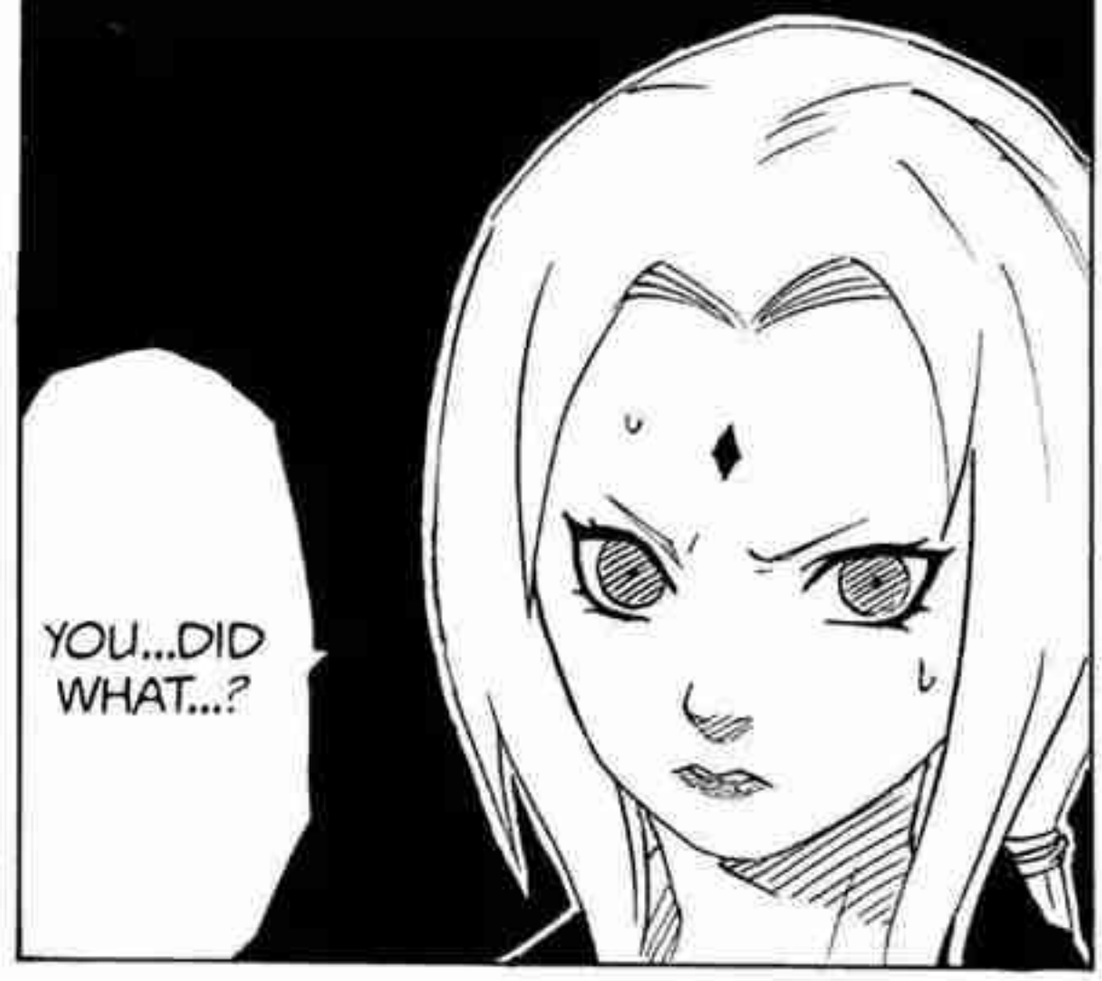
ONE OF THE THREE GREAT SHINOBI OF LEGEND, PRINCESS TSUNADE.
YOU WHO GAINED FAME AS A MEDIC SPECIALIST...
NO ONE EXCEPT YOU.


JUST A MINOR INCIDENT WHEN I KILLED THE THIRD LORD...
NOTHING REALLY...

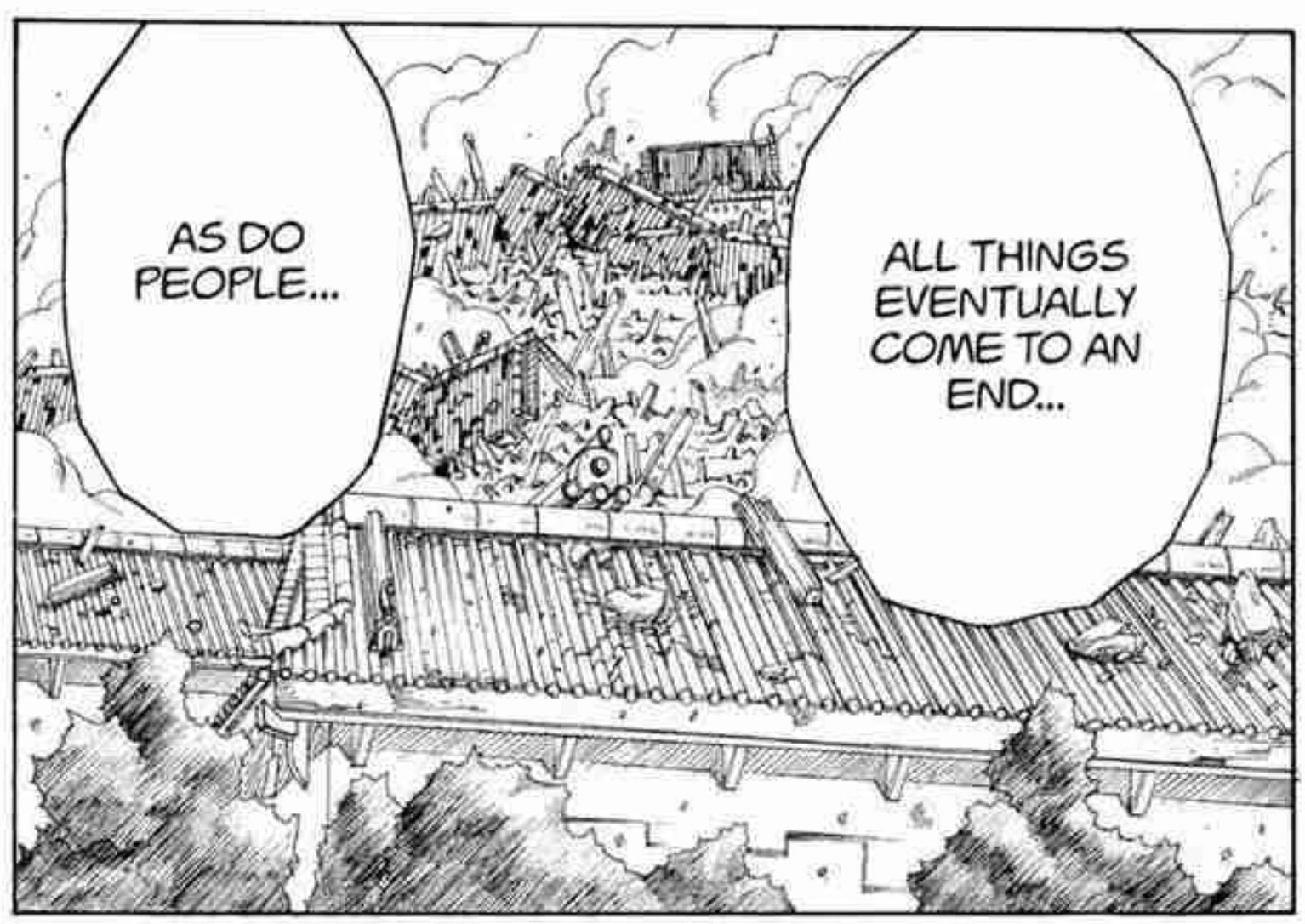
!!

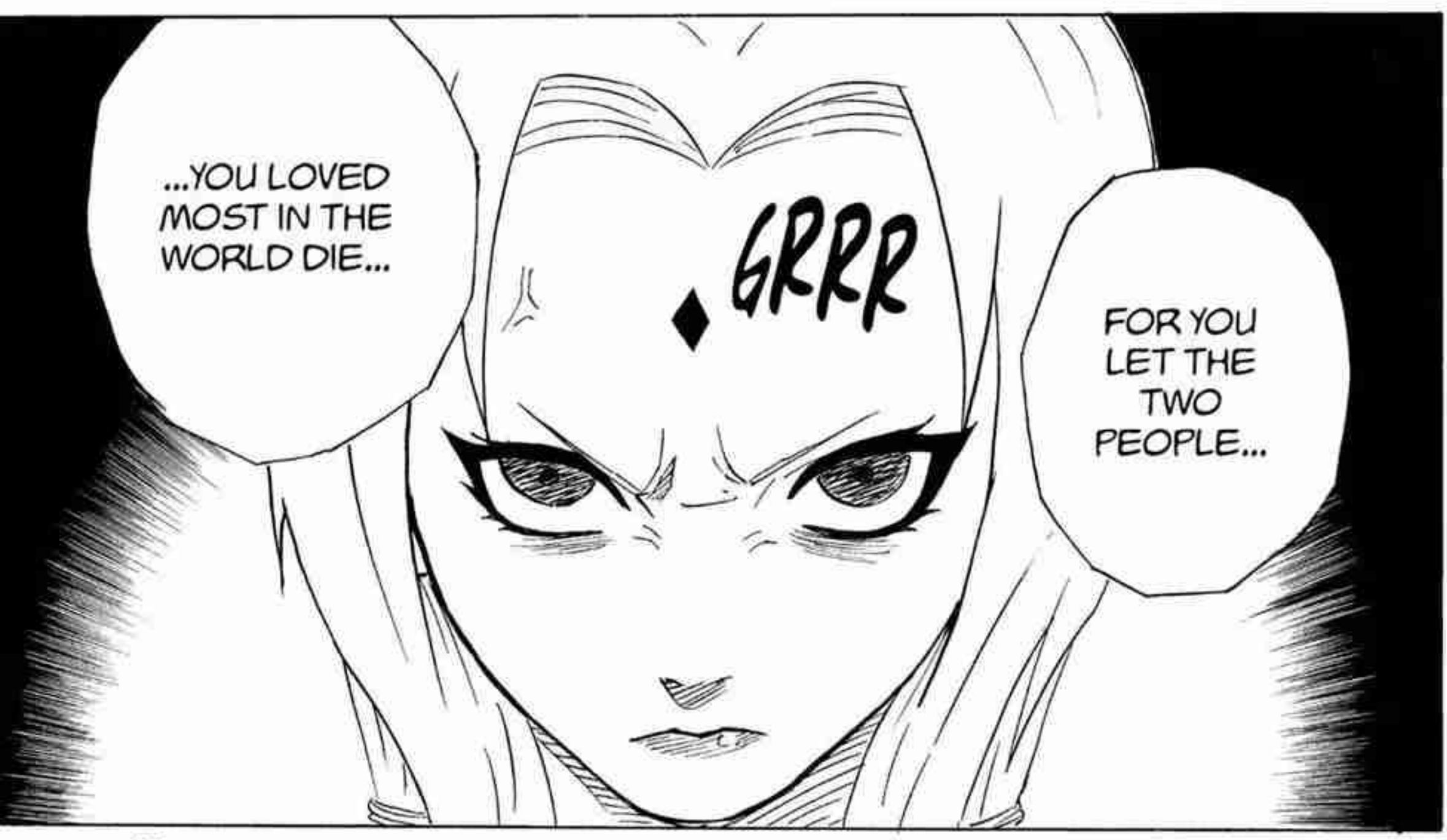
!!

HUMPH... NO NEED TO SCOWL, PRINCESS...

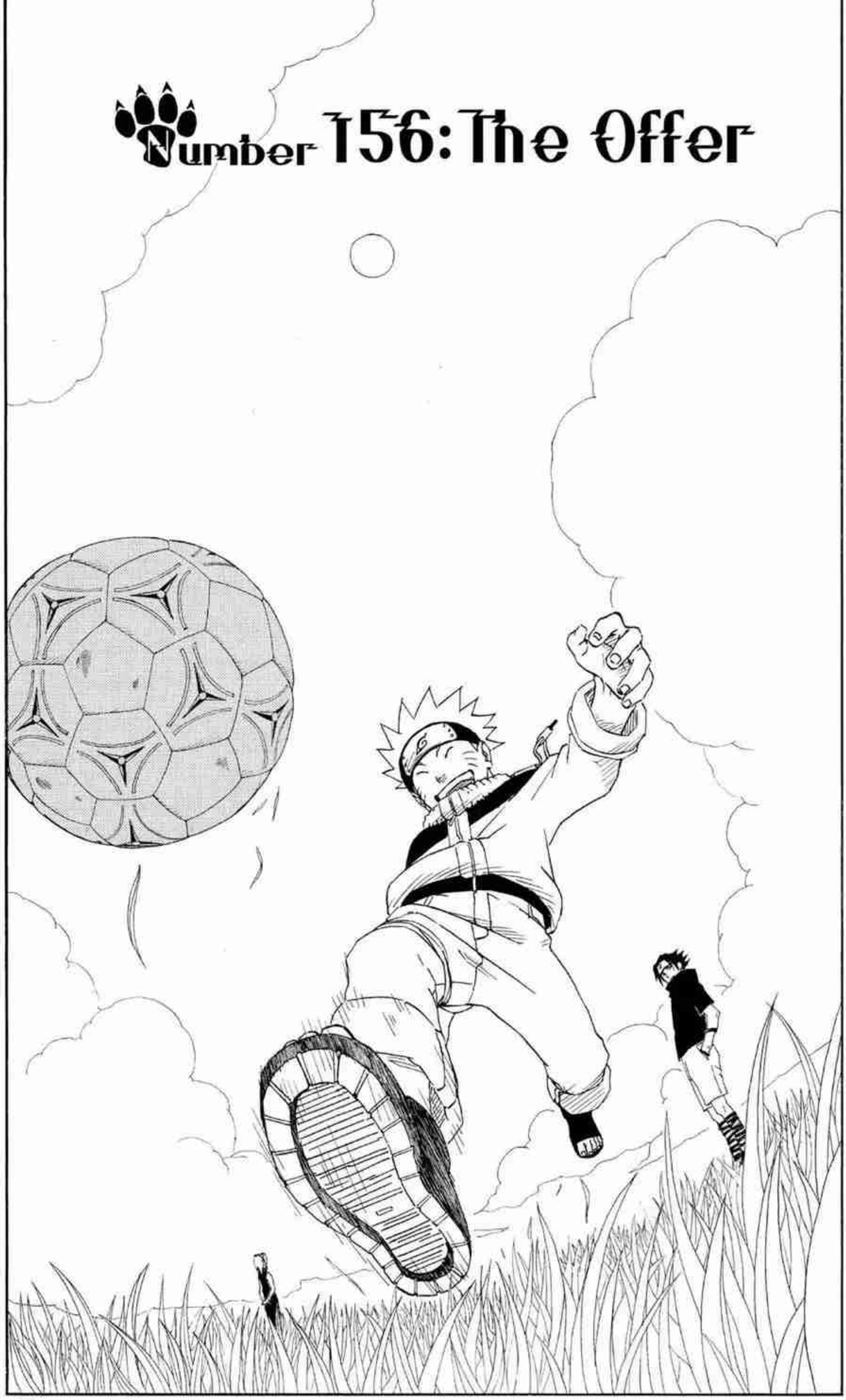

YOU...DID WHAT...?

YOU OUGHT TO KNOW...

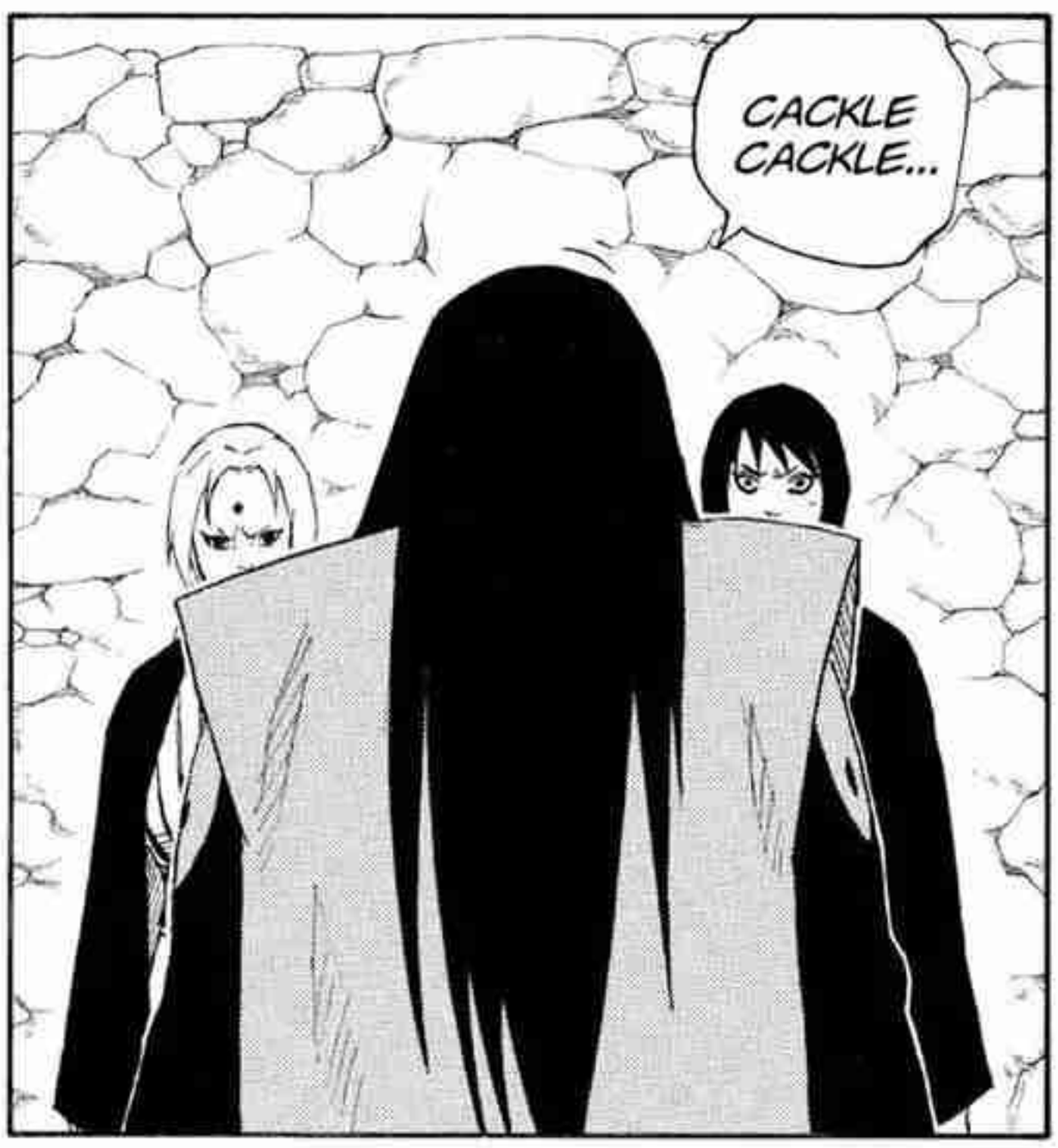

AS DO PEOPLE...
ALL THINGS EVENTUALLY COME TO AN END...


...YOU LOVED MOST IN THE WORLD DIE...
GRRR
FOR YOU LET THE TWO PEOPLE...

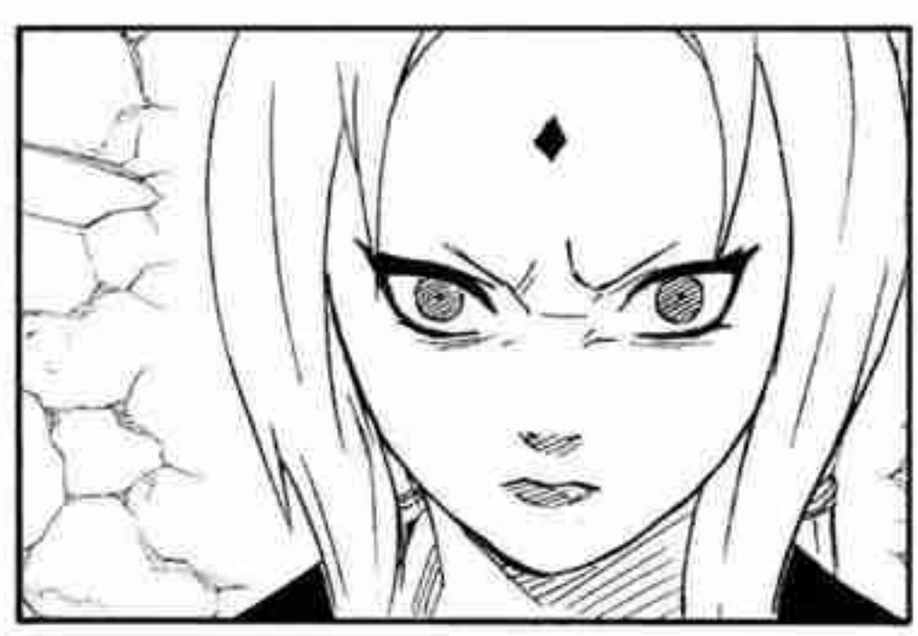
Number 156: The Offer



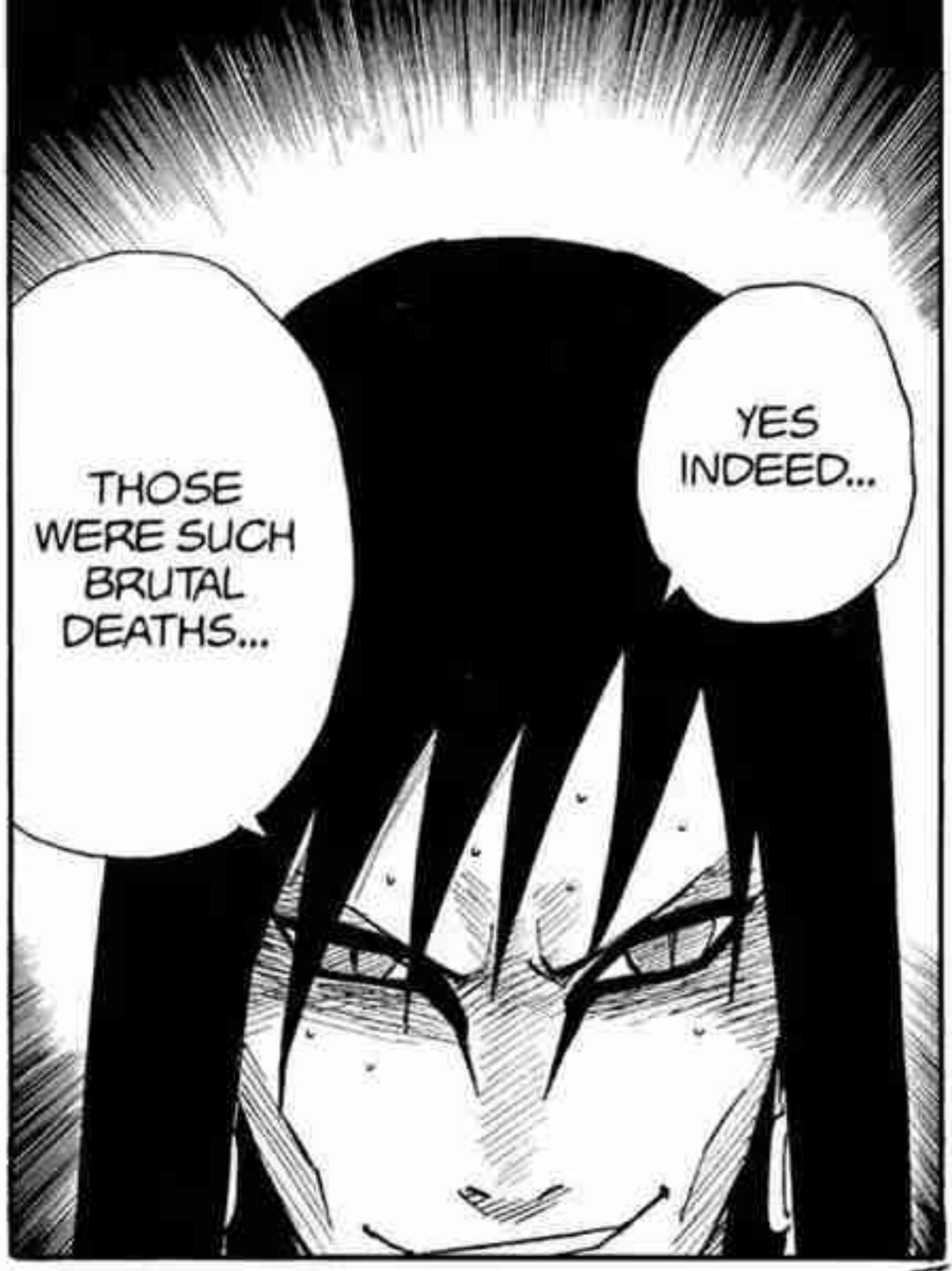
...
...SHE LET TWO PEOPLE WHO SHE LOVED... DIE...!?


CACKLE CACKLE...

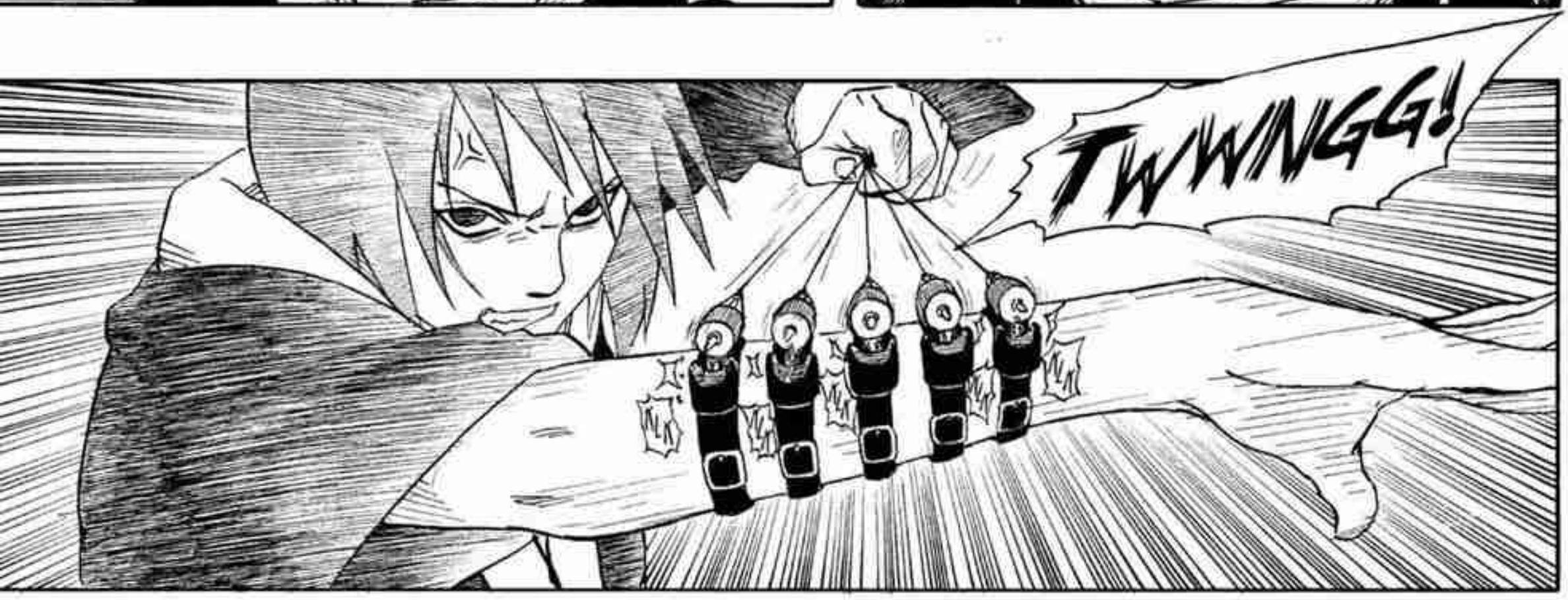
...I SEE NOW. YOU ARE MOST CRUEL...



BLUR
SLLP


THOSE WERE SUCH BRUTAL DEATHS...
YES INDEED...

!


TWWNGG!

SWSH-WSH-WSH-WSH
DSH

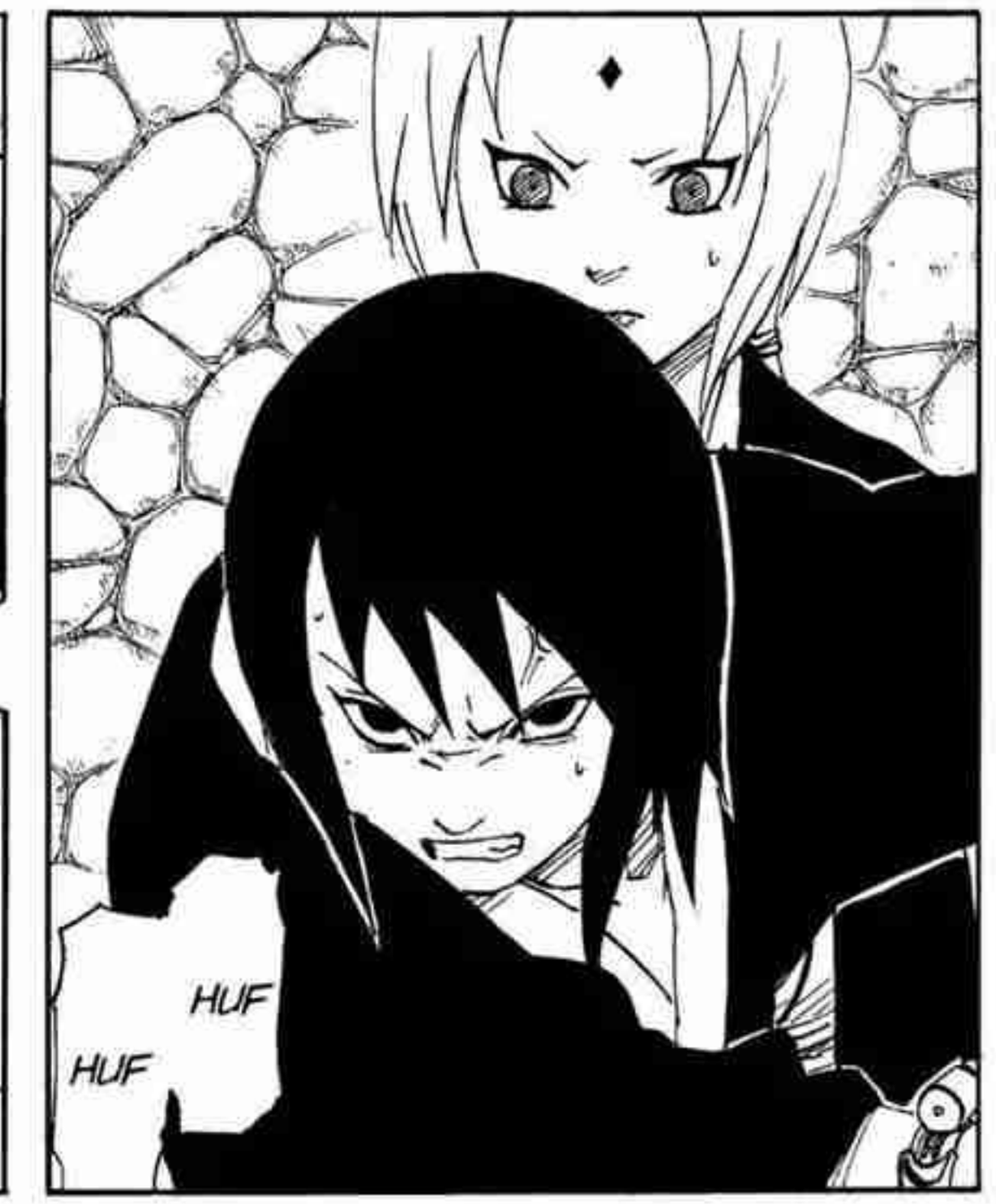
THKK
THKK
PLNK
PLNK

THKK
THKK

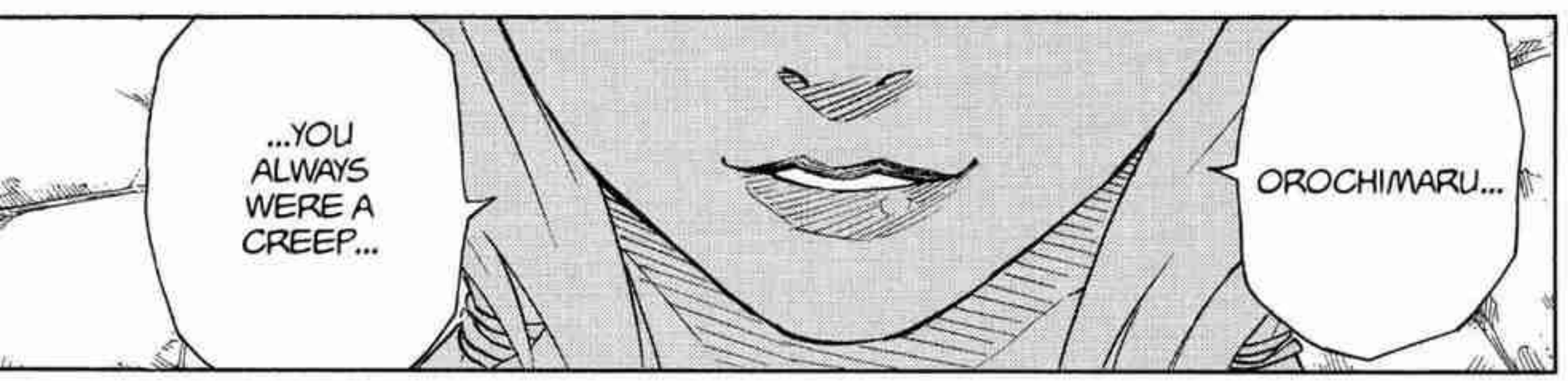
...POISON... THESE NEEDLES ARE LACED...

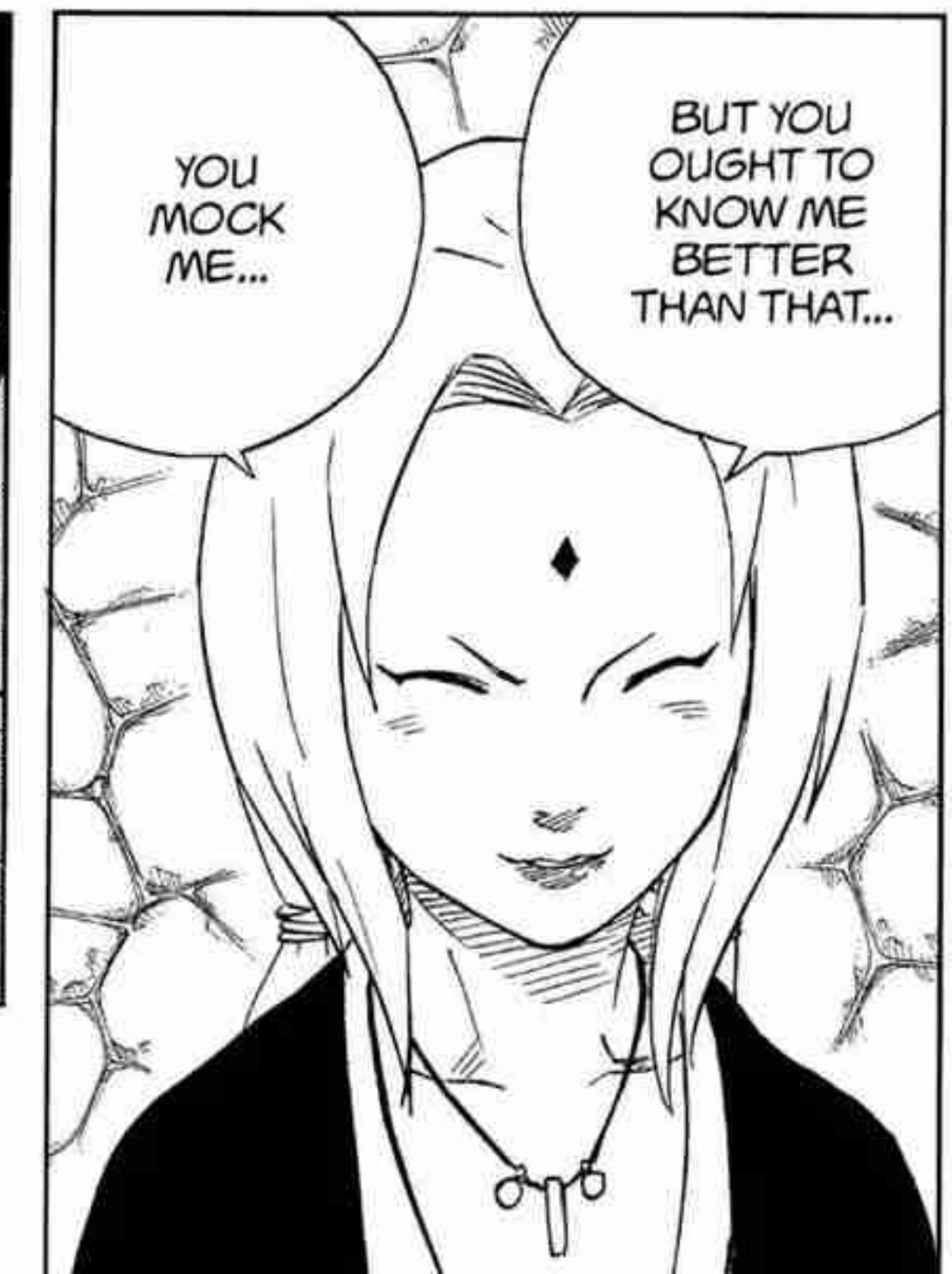
STAND DOWN, SHIZUNE.
賭

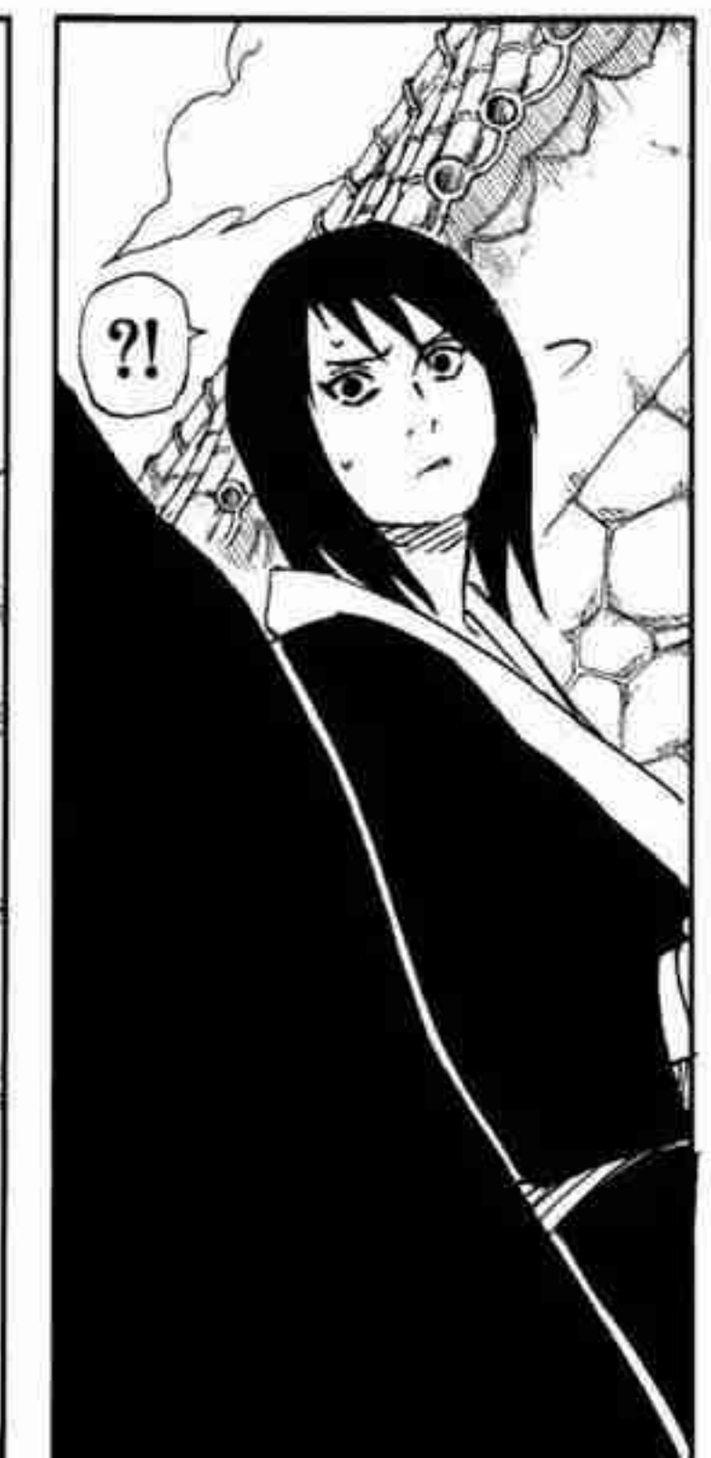
HER COMPANION...! SHE'S GOOD...


HUF
HUF

SIGH...


...YOU ALWAYS WERE A CREEP...
OROCHIMARU...


YOU MOCK ME...
BUT YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ME BETTER THAN THAT...


?!

BOMB

...AND I'LL KILL YOU!
OKAY?!

KRUOOOSH

AND... SCARY...

I BET SHE'S SINGLE... I'D PUT MONEY ON IT...

...

...SHE'S STRONG...!

POPPP

WAAH!

(Sign: Tanzaku Town)

WE WOULD MERELY LIKE TO STRIKE A DEAL WITH YOU.

WE DID NOT COME HERE TO FIGHT YOU...

SO I HOPE SHE'S STILL AROUND...

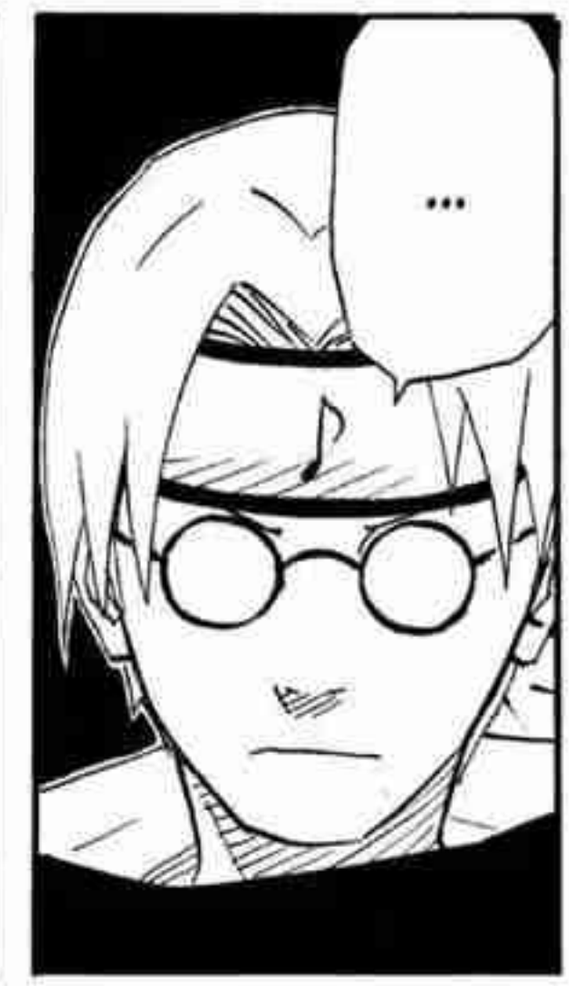
TSUNADE'S IMPATIENT AND SHORT-TEMPERED...

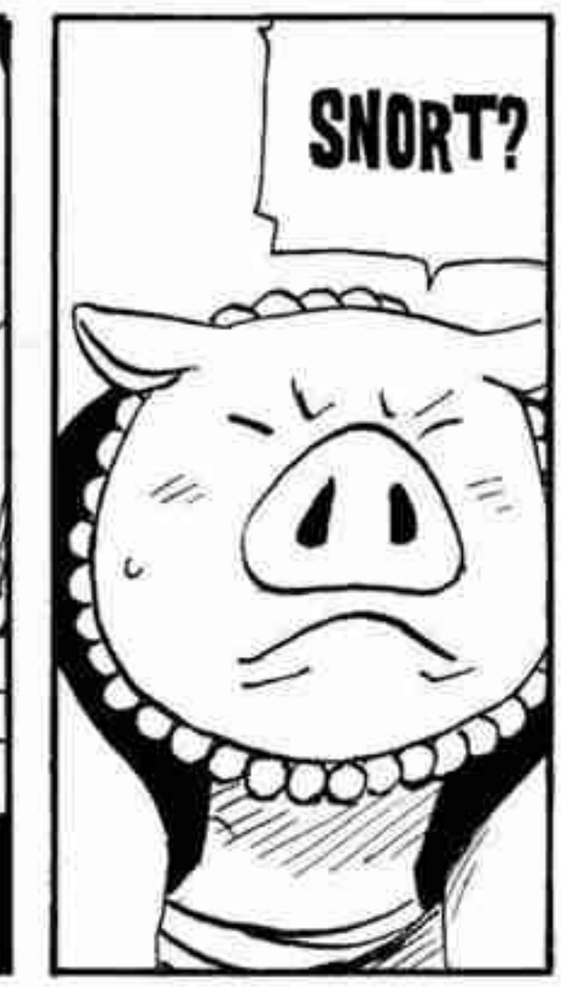
\OWW.../

READ THIS WAY
WON'T YOU CONSIDER... OUR OFFER?
WE'RE NOT ASKING YOU TO DO IT FOR FREE.
GET LOST!
I THOUGHT I JUST TOLD YOU.
YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HEAL LORD OROCHIMARU'S ARMS.
OR ELSE I'LL ERASE YOU.
I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A COUNT OF FIVE...
GET LOST BEFORE I FINISH!
4
5
I REALLY DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE DISAPPOINTED BY THE TERMS...
PLEASE CALM DOWN...
1
...
2
3
SIGH...

...I CAN REANIMATE YOUR BELOVED LITTLE BROTHER AND YOUR LOVER BOTH...

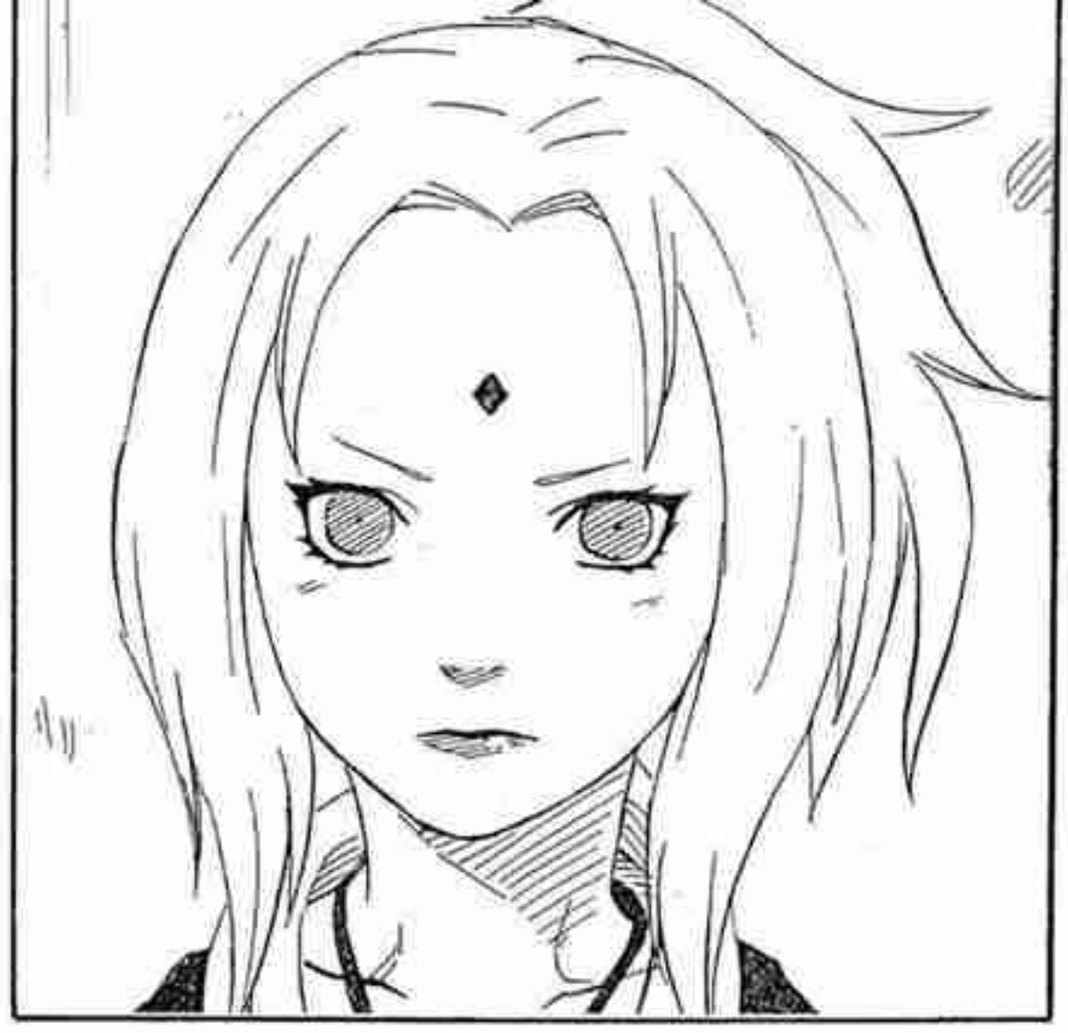
I'VE LEARNED THE FORBIDDEN JUTSU...





...MEAN OUR OFFER IS ACCEPTABLE?

DOES THE FACT THAT WE'RE STILL STANDING HERE WHOLE AND HALE...



大人
丁
半
ばくち

THERE? WHERE'S THERE?

I BELIEVE SHE SAID SHE WAS HEADING THERE...
TO TRY TO WIN BACK THE MONEY SHE LOST HERE.

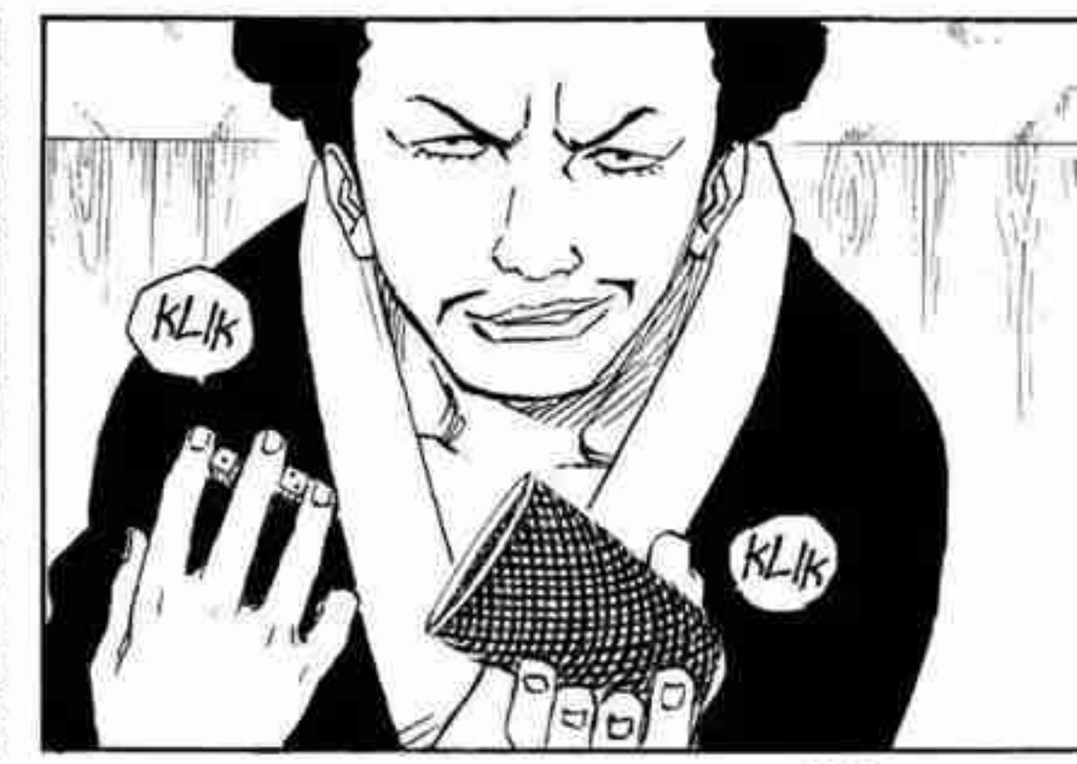
AAH...!
I THINK I KNOW THAT LADY...

SHUT UP! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M BUSY HERE?! LEAVE ME ALONE!

IF YOU ADD THE PIPS ON THE DICE AND GET AN EVEN NUMBER, THAT'S CHÔ.
IF YOU GET AN ODD NUMBER, THAT'S HAN.
LOOKIE HERE, BOY.

CLOMP

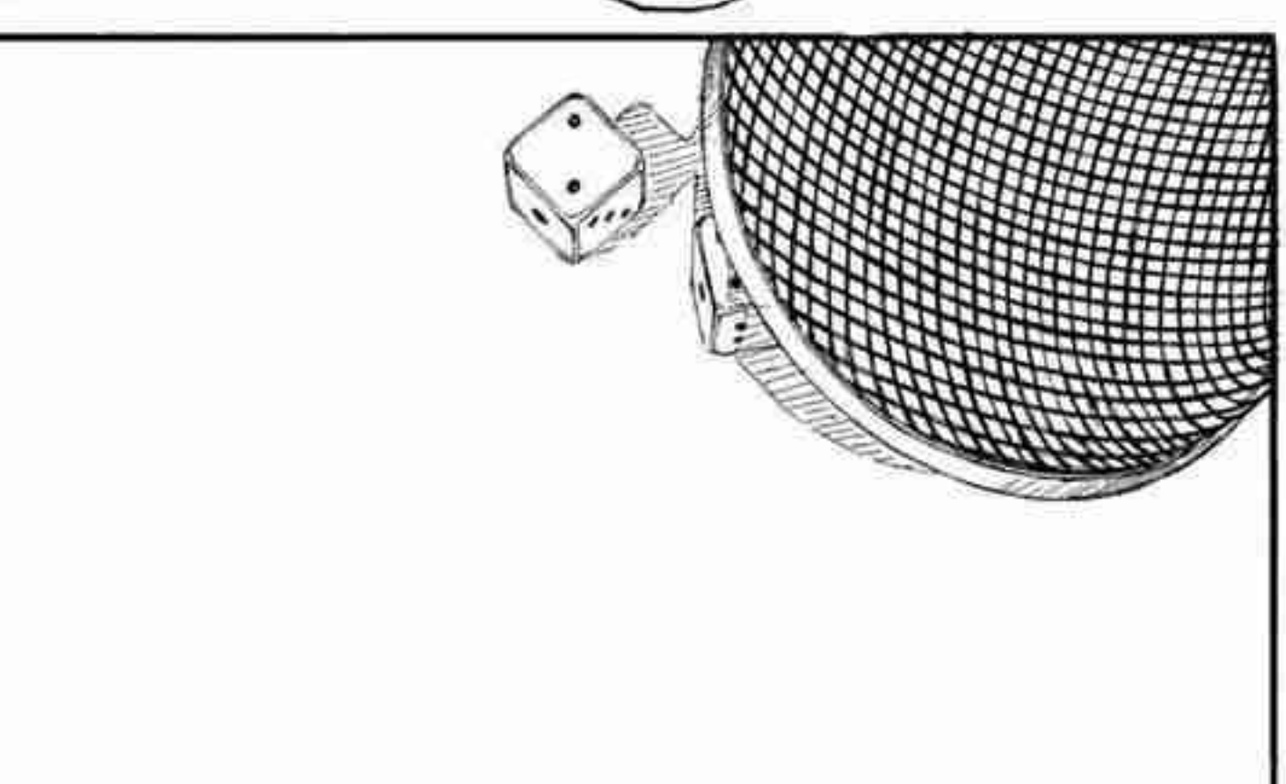
SWSH


KLIK
KLIK

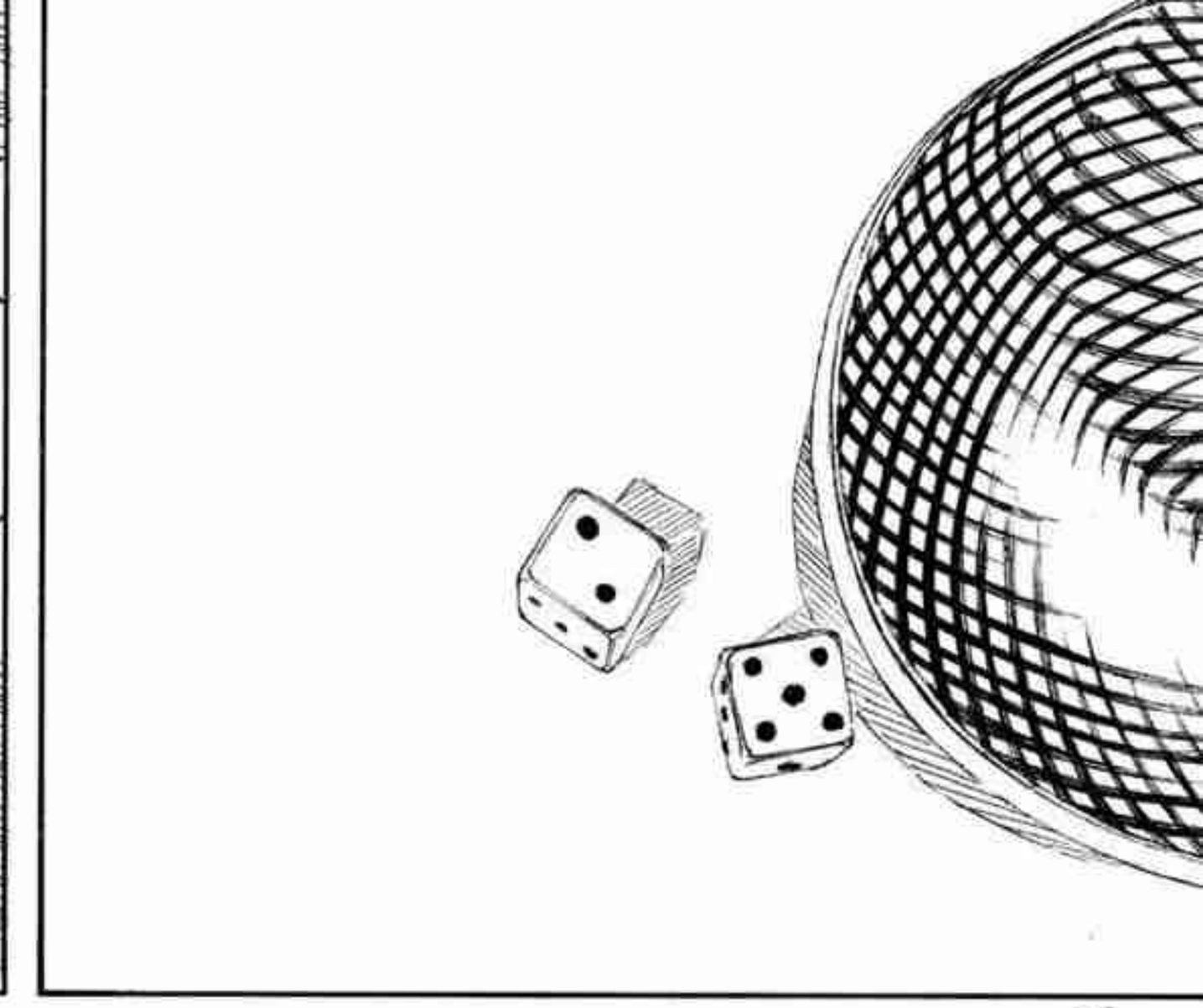
IF YOU WIN, I WON'T CHARGE YOU FOR THE INFORMATION... BUT IF YOU LOSE, IT'LL COST YOU 1,000 RYO*. HOW'S THAT?

HEY, THERE'S NO FREE ANYTHING AT A GAMBLING HOUSE. LET'S MAKE A DEAL.

(*1,000 ryo is roughly 10,000 yen, or $100.)

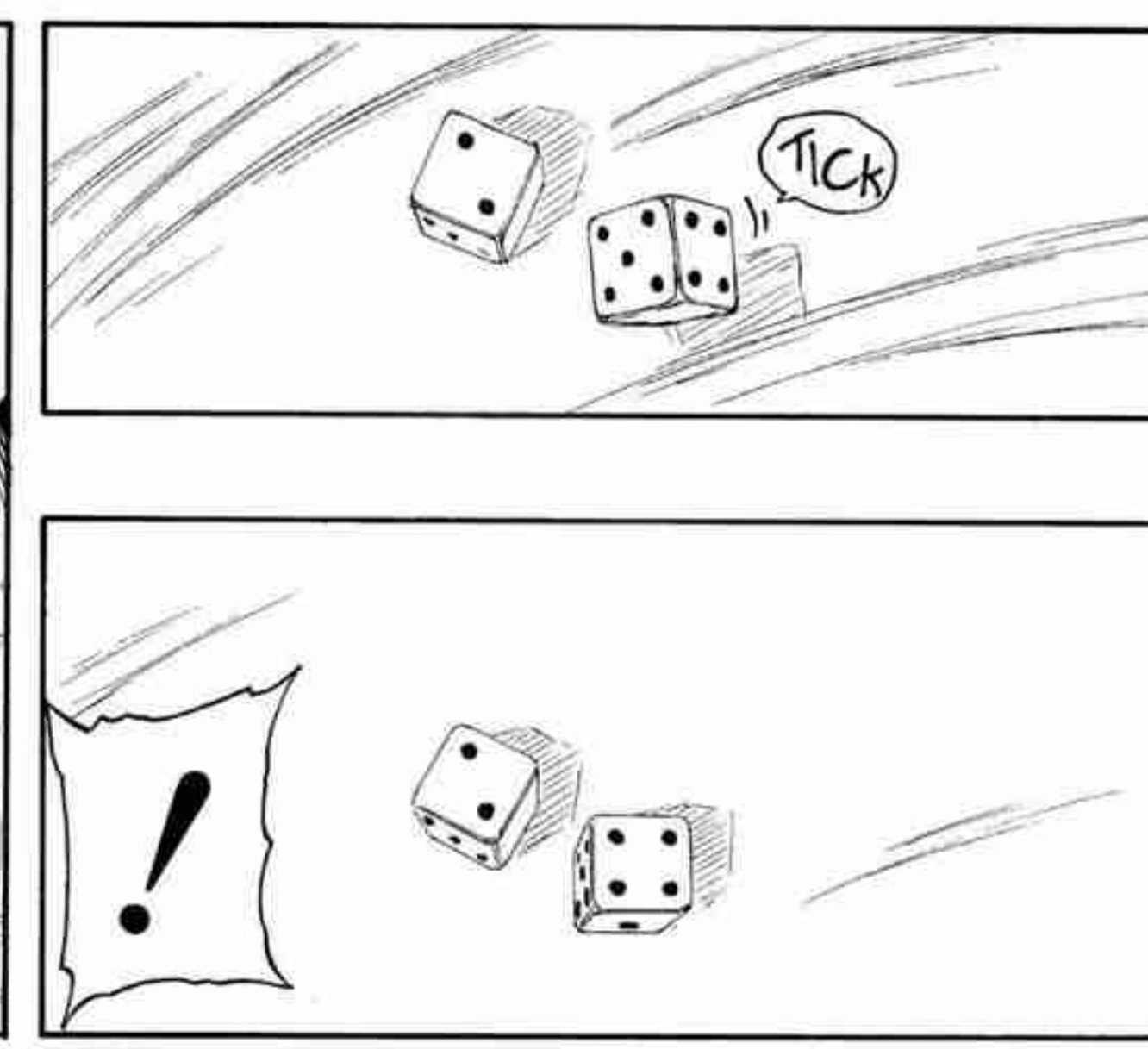


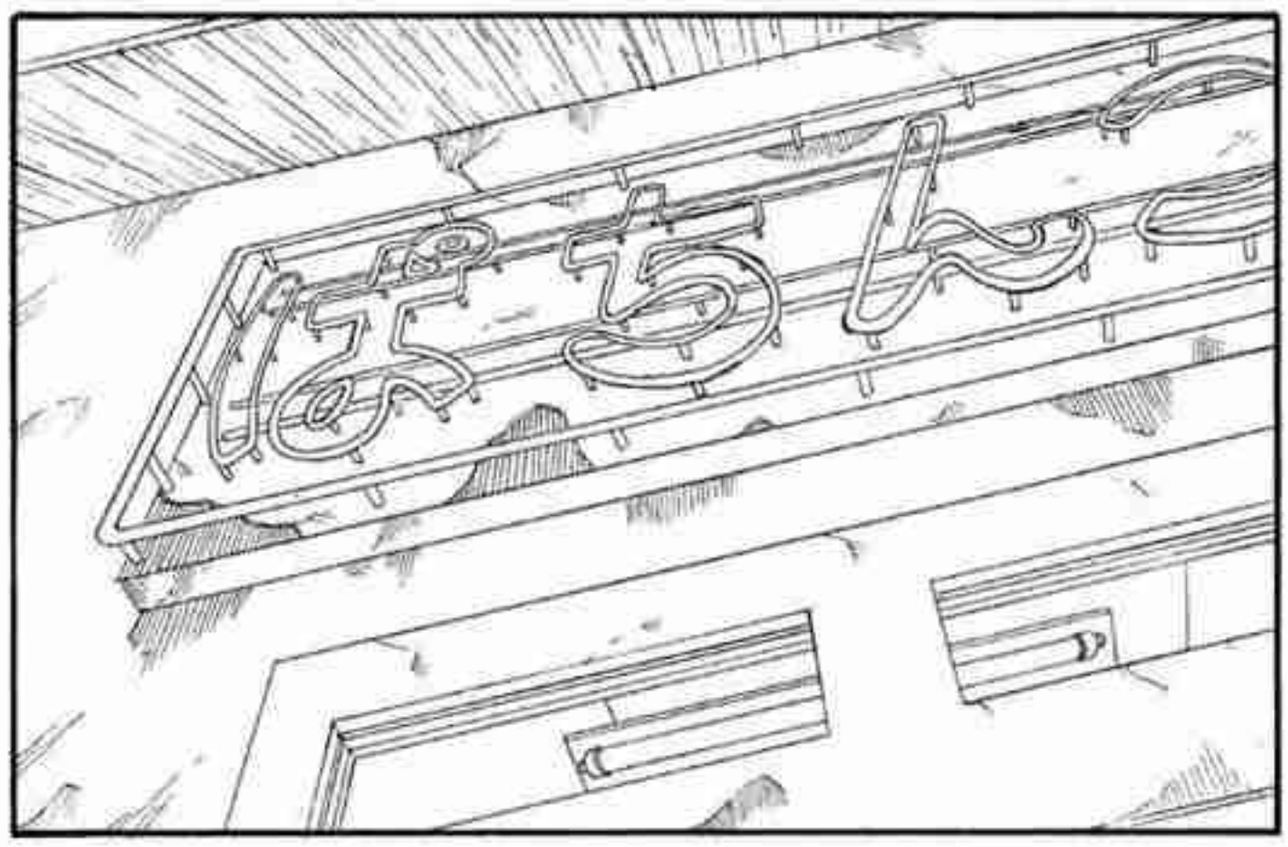
SH... SHOOT...! 2+5=7, HAN!
!



!
POPP
WAH!

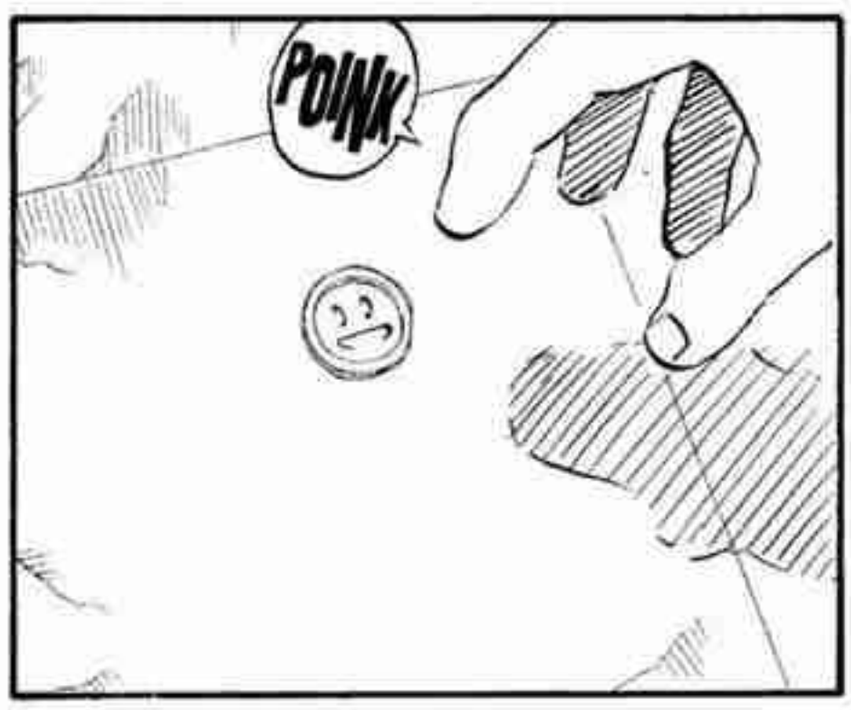
HO HO...IT LOOKS LIKE I WON!
NICE, NARUTO!!
OH!


TICK
!



DARN! FOILED AGAIN!

!


POINK

SHEESH, SHE AIN'T HERE!
SQNT SQNT
SRCH SRCH

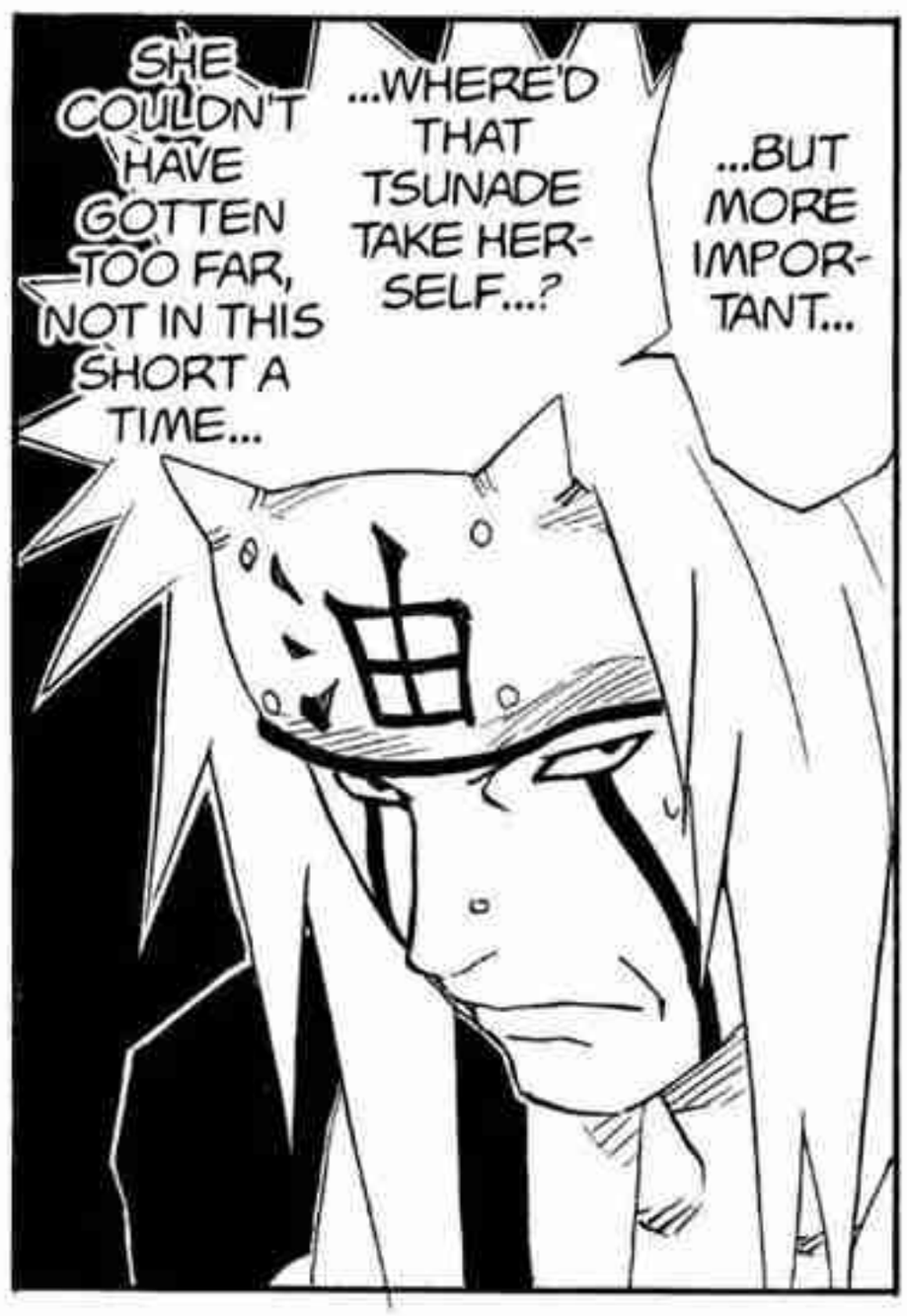
RSTL RSTLE
IS THIS WHERE I PUT IT IN...?

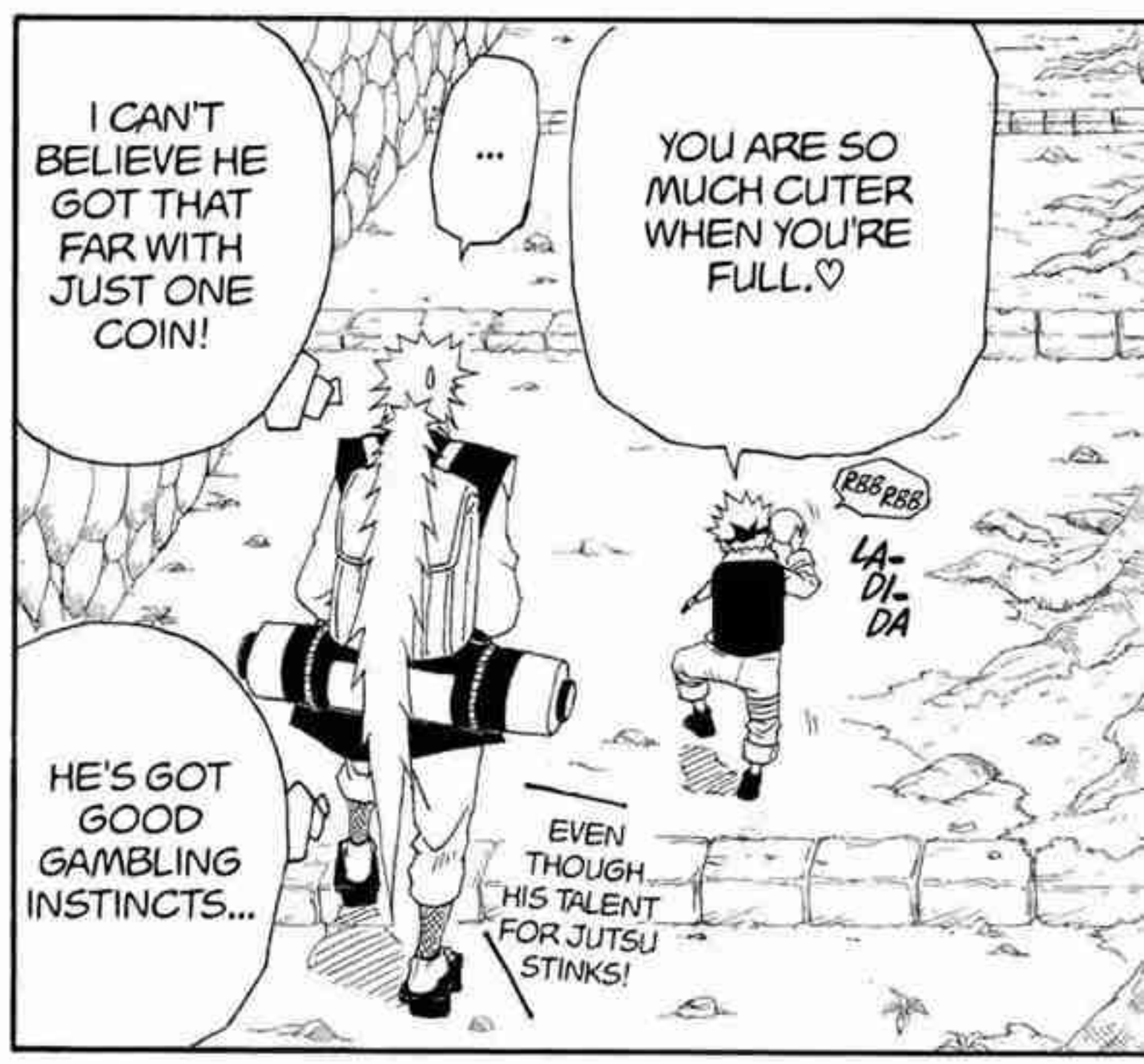
TH-

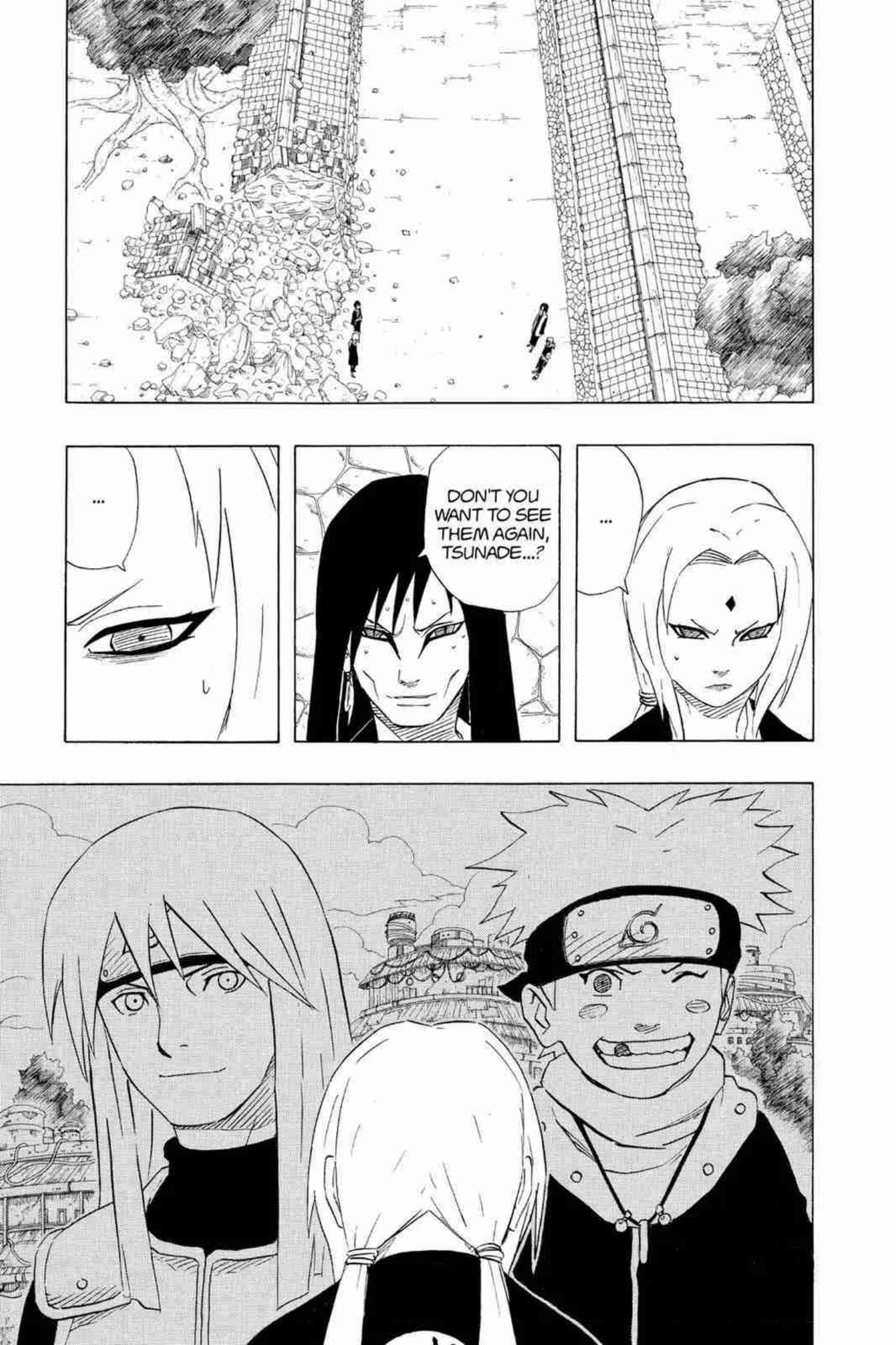
PLMP PLMP

なるとさいふ

DAA





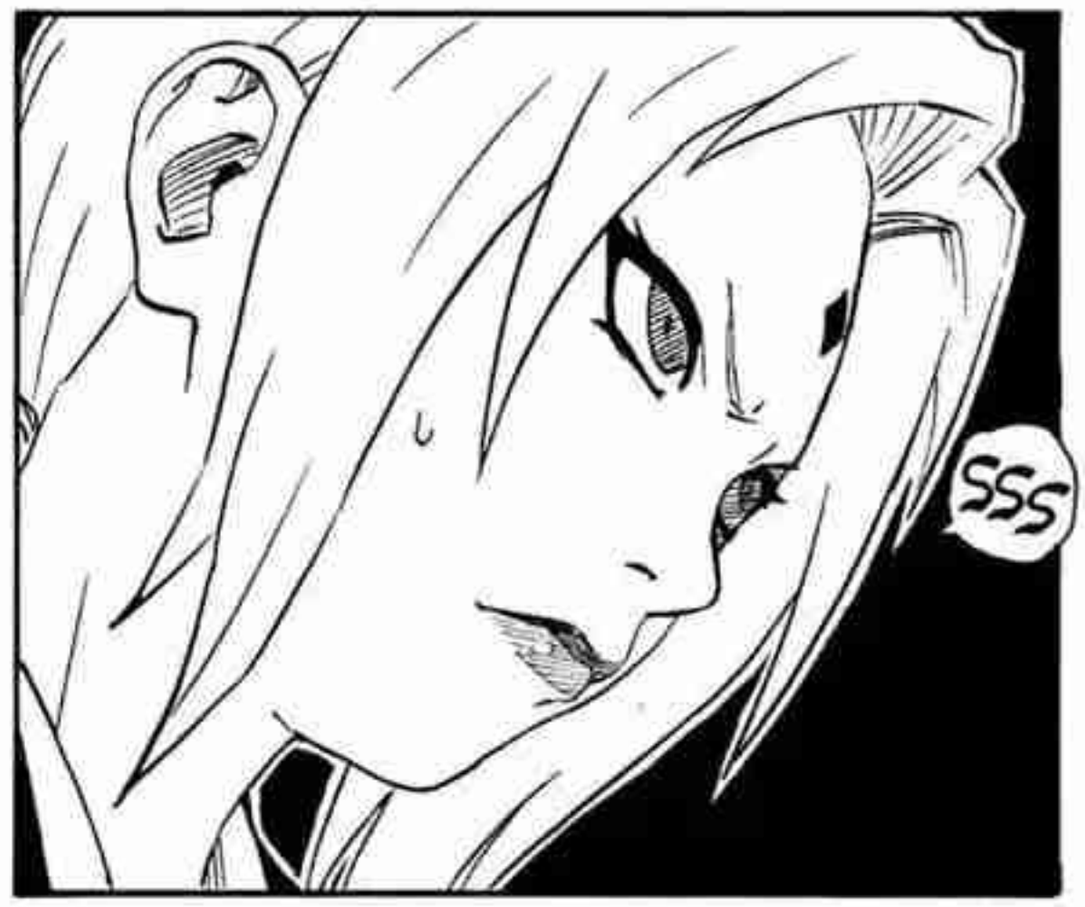

...
DON'T YOU WANT TO SEE THEM AGAIN, TSUNADE...?
...

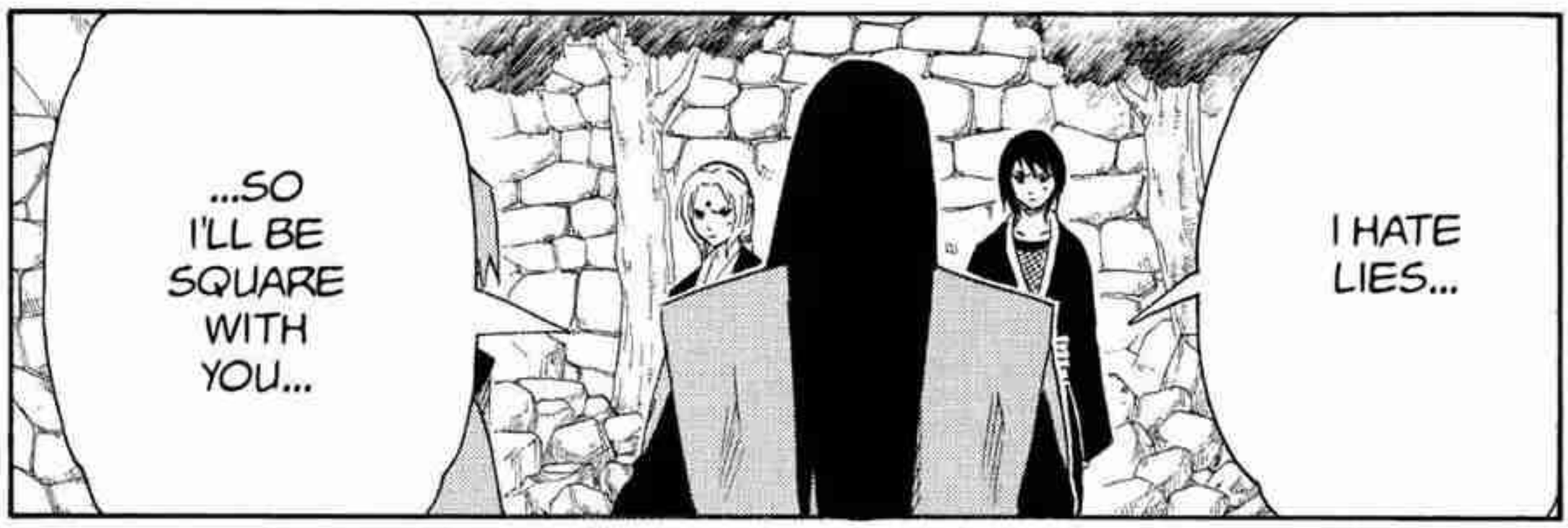
...DAN...

...NAWAKI...

...

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
...SUPPOSE I FIX THOSE ARMS...
賭


SSS


...SO I'LL BE SQUARE WITH YOU...
I HATE LIES...

...ALONG THE WAY OF CLAIMING THAT WHICH I DESIRE...

?!!
油
SO WHERE'S THIS CASTLE?
HEY! WAIT!
...THIS TIME I ANNIHILATE KONOHA ONCE AND FOR ALL.

THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
MY PERSONAL HISTORY, PART 27-B

I LIKE OIL PAINTING, DON'T GET ME WRONG, BUT WHAT I LEARNED IN COLLEGE WAS FINE ART, SO IT WAS PRETTY USELESS. I WAS TAUGHT THAT ONE SHOULD CREATE WHATEVER ONE FELT LIKE, EXPRESSING SOMETHING THAT WAS INSIDE ONESELF IN A WAY THAT IT COULD BE APPRECIATED BY THE VIEWER, AND YET IT SEEMED TO ME THAT MOST WORKS WERE SO ABSTRACT THAT THE VIEWER HAD TO RELY ON THE TITLE OR THE ACCOMPANYING BLURB, AND NOT ON THE PIECE ALONE. ONCE, MY INSTRUCTOR BROUGHT IN PHOTOS OF OILS HE HAD PAINTED HIMSELF, AND WAS BOASTING ABOUT HIS SOLO EXHIBITIONS AND HOW HE HAD SOLD HIS ART, BUT ALL I COULD THINK TO MYSELF WAS "IF YOU WANT YOUR STUFF TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED MORE, BE A BETTER ENTREPRENEUR!" IT WAS ALWAYS INSTRUCTORS LIKE HIM THAT WOULD RIDICULE MANGA, AND TRY TO IMPOSE A RANKING SYSTEM UPON THE ART WORLD. THEY WHO ELEVATED FINE ART AND DENIGRATED ENTERTAINMENT WERE THE ONES WHO WANTED TO SELL THEIR OWN WORK OR BE ACKNOWLEDGED THE MOST. I THINK IF THEY REALLY WANT TO CREATE FINE ART, THEY SHOULD AIM FOR SELF-SATISFACTION. BECAUSE WORKS THAT THEY PAINT HOPING TO RELAY AND EXPRESS THEIR EGO, NO MATTER IF THEY FIT WITHIN THE REALM OF FINE ART, ONCE THEY DECIDE THEY WANT TO MAKE A LIVING FROM SELLING SUCH WORKS, THEY'VE ALREADY MOVED IN THE DIRECTION OF ENTERTAINMENT.

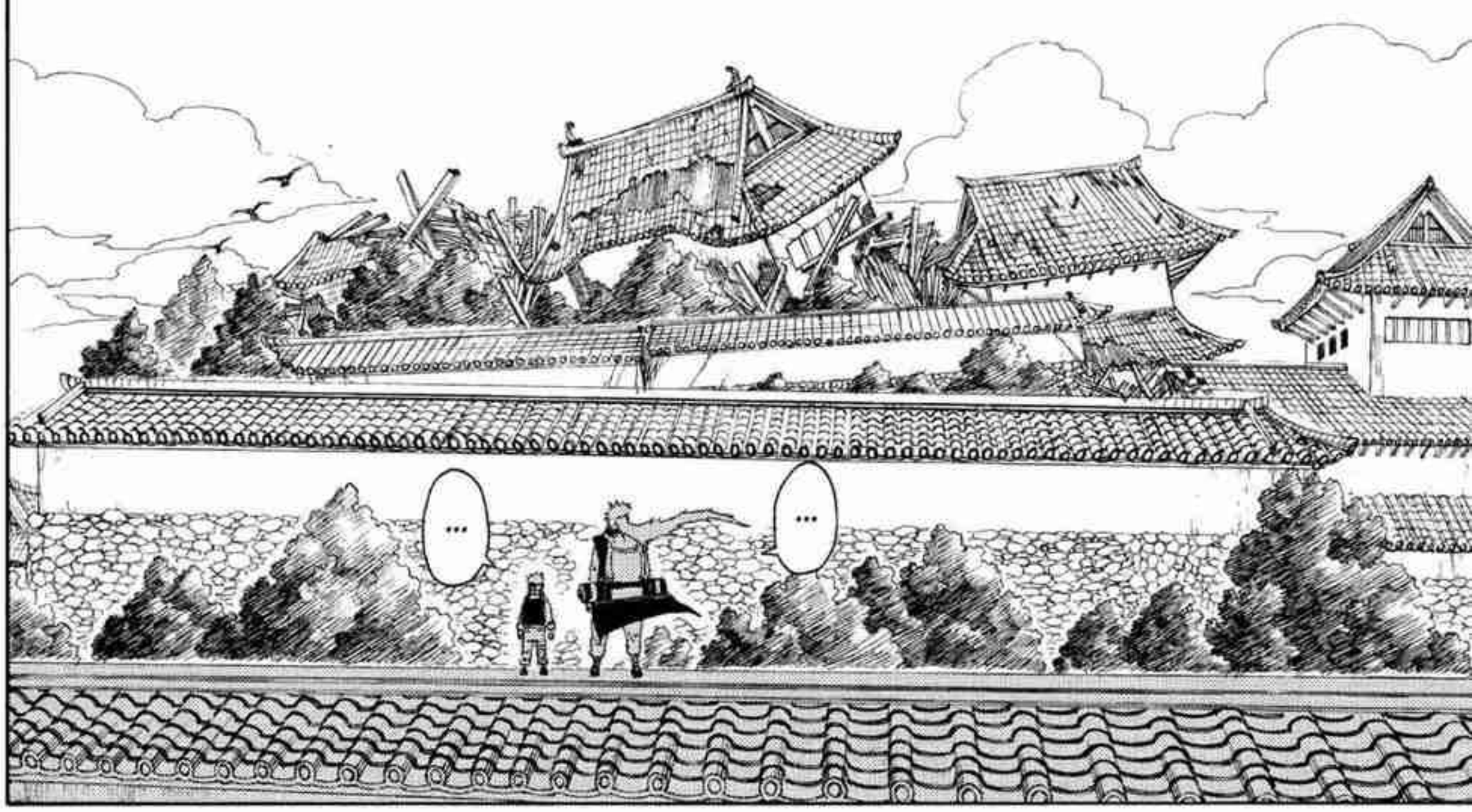
THE WORKS OF THOSE WHO WANT TO MAKE A LIVING AS PAINTERS BUT WHO CAN'T LIVE OFF OF THE SALE OF THEIR PAINTINGS SO RELUCTANTLY FIND EMPLOYMENT AS ART TEACHERS AND DENIGRATE MANGA (I.E. ENTERTAINMENT) ARE THE LOWEST FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT.

I THINK MANGA IS AN AMAZING MEDIUM BECAUSE NOT ONLY IS IT LOW-COST IN TERMS OF PRODUCTION, DEPENDING ONLY ON INK PRICES, BUT IT IS HIGH-QUALITY ENTERTAINMENT WHERE IT IS EASY TO CONVEY ONE'S SELF-EXPRESSION THROUGH THE USE OF DIALOGUE, STORYBOARDING, AND CHARACTERS.

...I LOVE FINE ART, DON'T GET ME WRONG. AND I REALLY ADMIRE THOSE WHO PRODUCE FINE ART. IT'S JUST THAT I AM WARY OF THOSE ARTISTS WHO TRY TO JUDGE FINE ART AGAINST ENTERTAINMENT. IT IS THOSE ARTISTS WHO ARE NEITHER ARTISTS NOR ENTERTAINERS, BUT JUST PLAIN CRUD. ♡

...HUH, I HADN'T REALLY INTENDED TO WRITE ABOUT THIS... BUT I GUESS OLD RAGE DIES HARD...A-HA-HA.

Number 157: Tsunade's Answer...?!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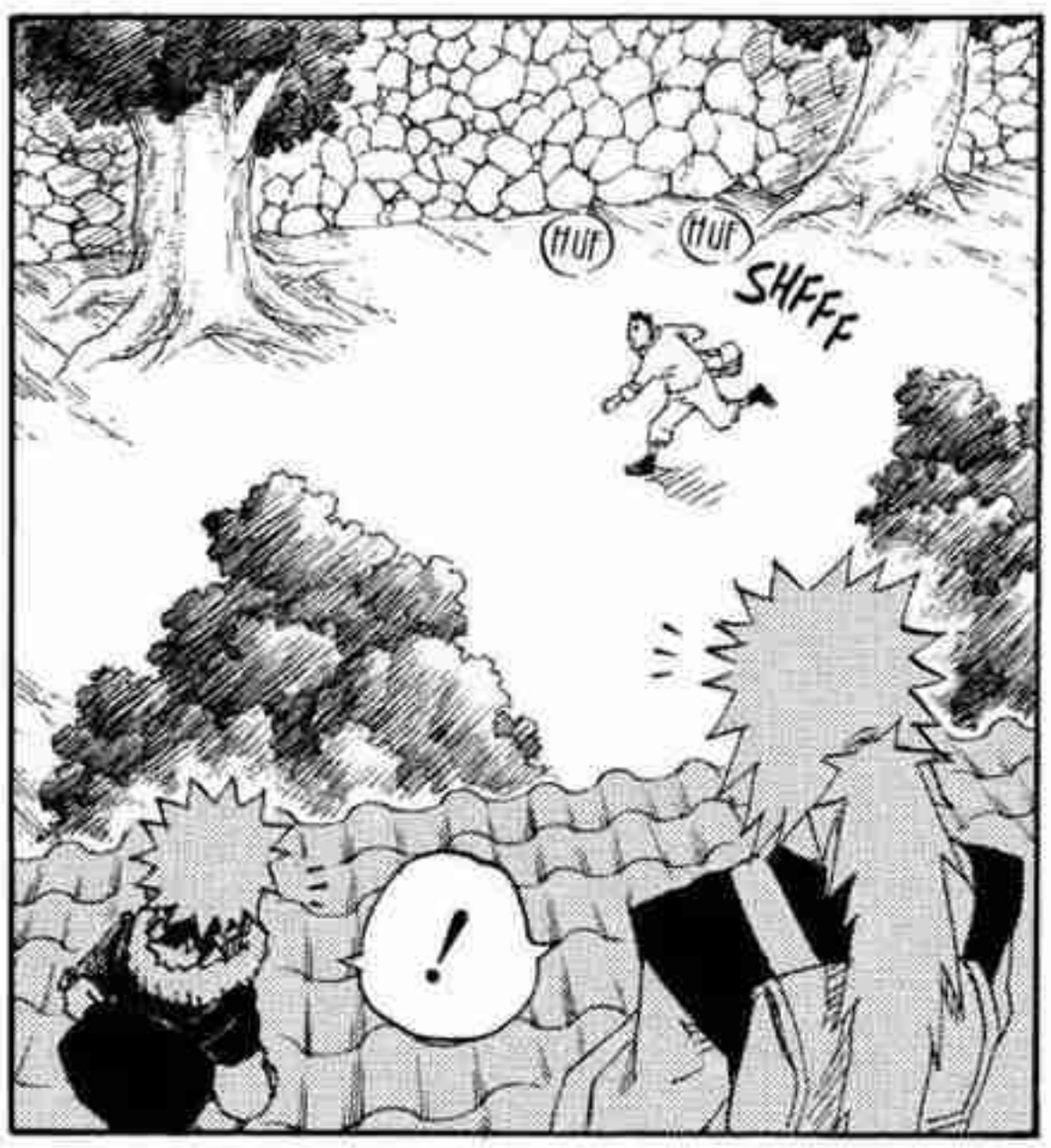
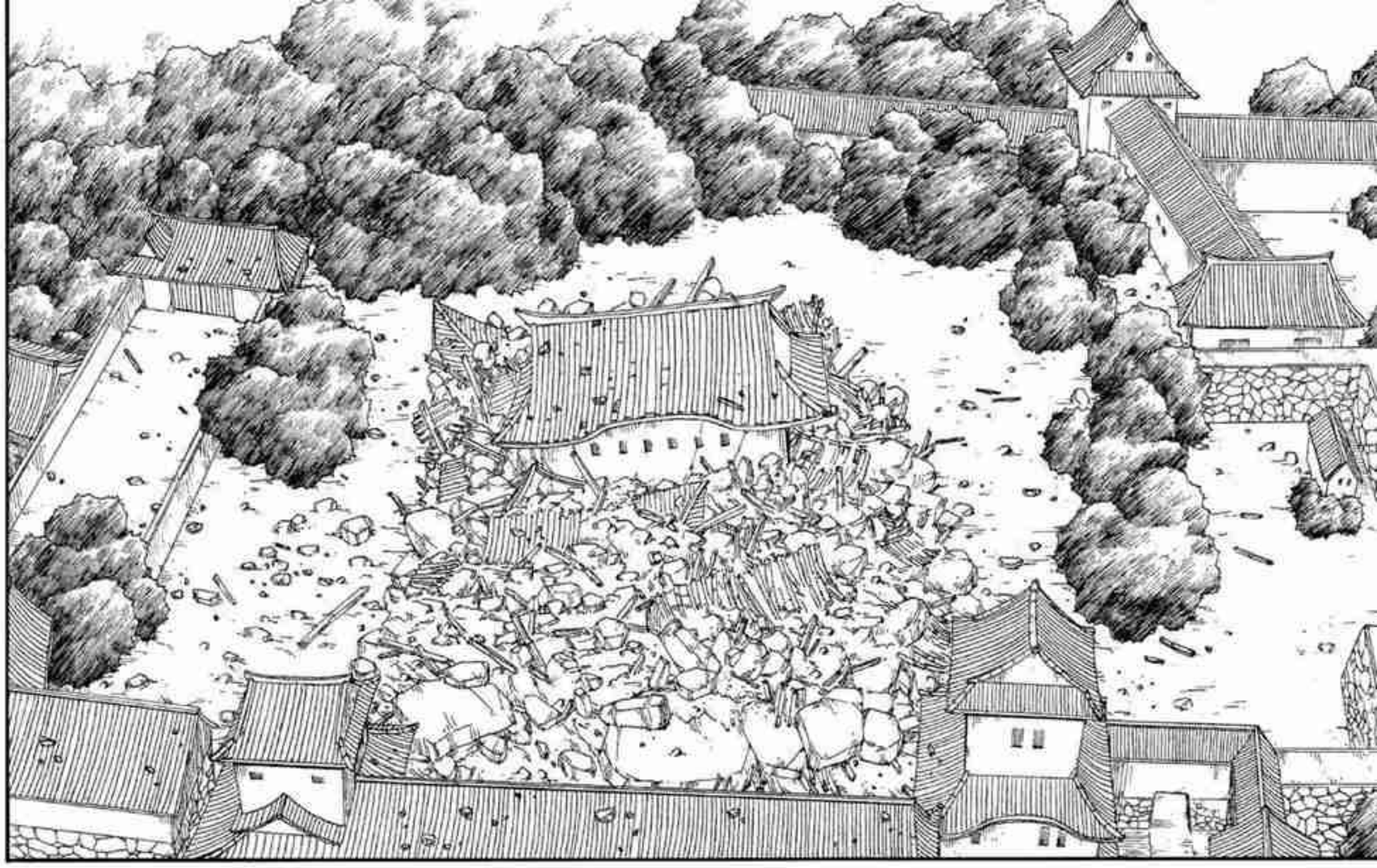

Hur
Hur
SHFFF
!

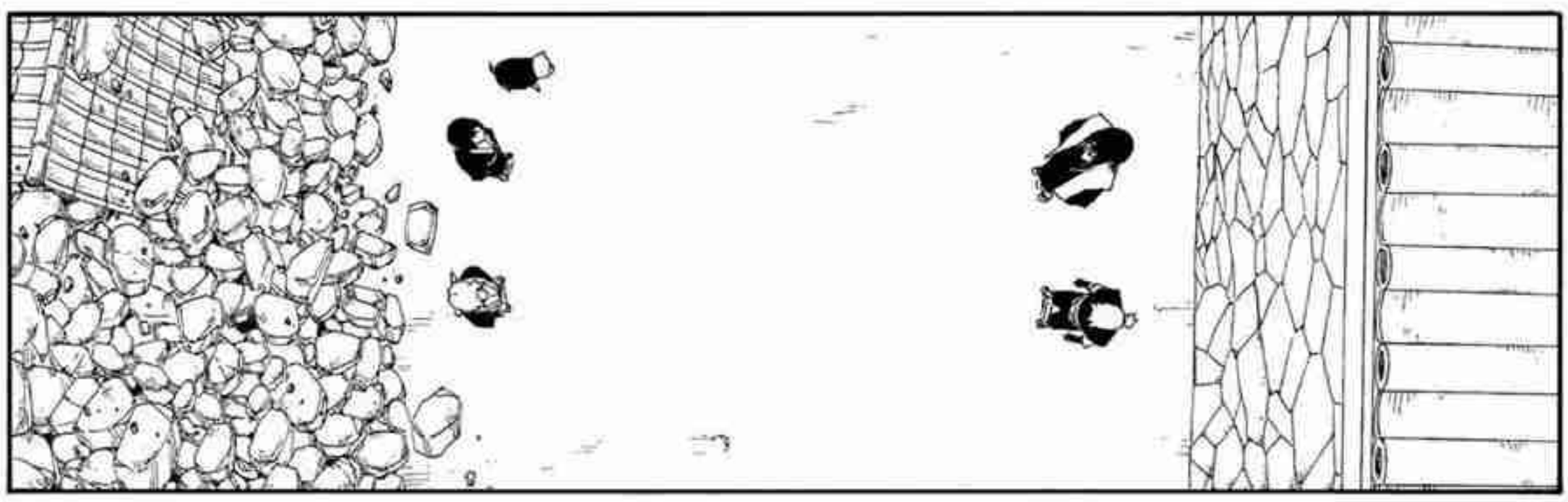
WHAT'S... GOING ON...?
BEATS ME...

...!
THERE ARE MONSTERS UP THERE!
YOU ALL OUGHT TO RUN TOO!

WHAT THE HECK WENT DOWN HERE?
HO THERE, STRANGER! HOLD ON JUST A MINUTE!
!

READ THIS WAY
IT DESTROYED THE CASTLE IN AN INSTANT!
A...A GIANT SERPENT!
...WHAT SORT OF MONSTERS ?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
MONSTERS ?!
...
...
WHRRL
METHINKS THIS SNAKE...IS THE SAME FELLA YOU MET ONCE...
!
C'MON, NARUTO!
I'VE SEEN ONE BEFORE TOO! IN MY VILLAGE...
I WAS ATTACKED BY THIS HUMONGOUS SNAKE...
?!
HOW BIG WAS IT?

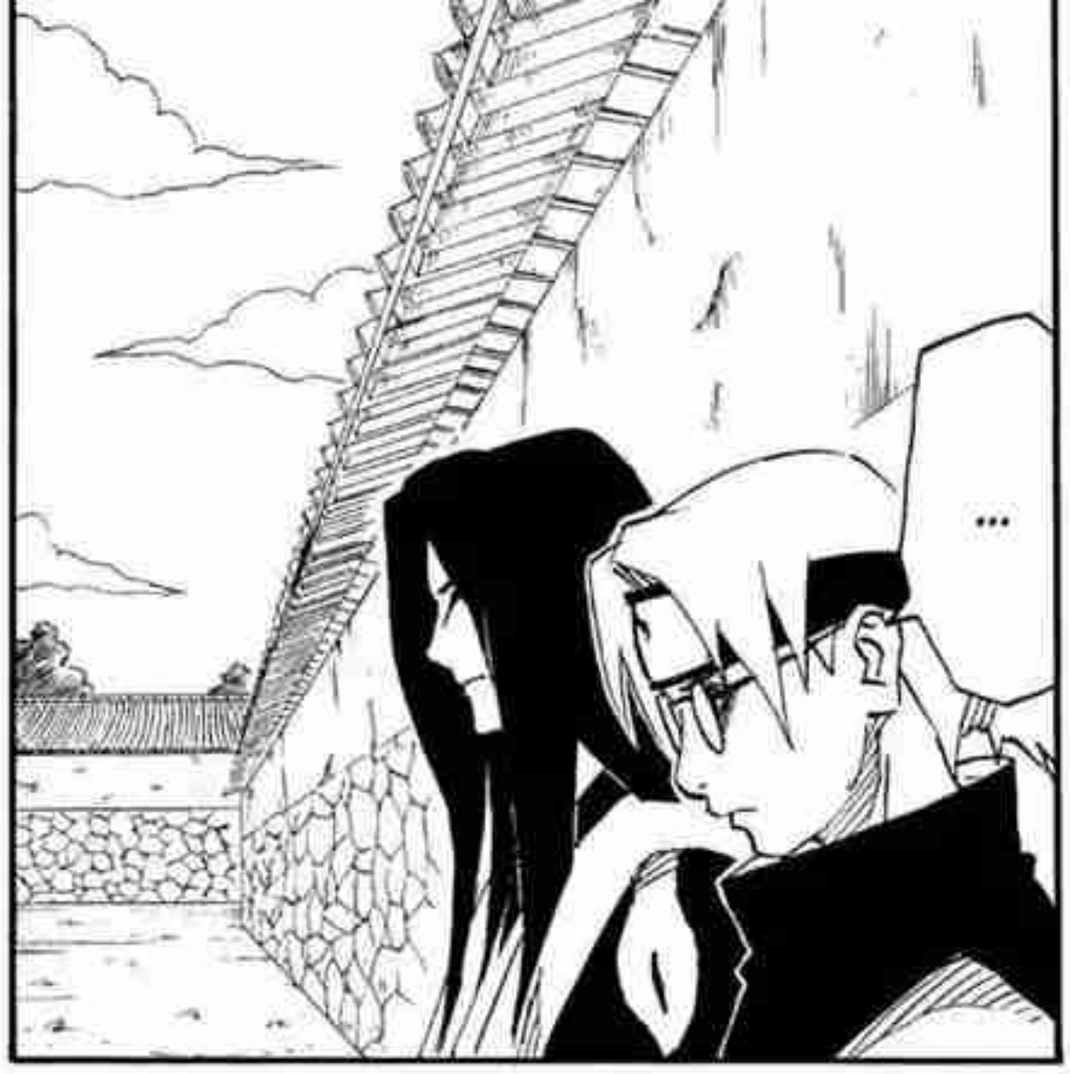




...

ANNIHILATE KONOHA?!
...

READ THIS WAY
LADY TSUNADE!
...YOUR ANSWER?
THAT NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY, YOU STILL, DEEP DOWN...
I KNOW IT!
NEITHER YOUR LITTLE BROTHER NOR MY UNCLE WOULD WANT THIS!
NO! YOU MUSTN'T BE TAKEN IN BY THEIR SWEET TALK...!
...HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YOUR WISH... YOUR DREAM, LADY TSUNADE?!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THEIR WISHES... OR EVEN MORE SO...


...

...

HOWEVER, WE WOULD LIKE A RESPONSE IN ONE WEEK'S TIME.
...YOU NEED NOT GIVE US YOUR ANSWER THIS VERY MINUTE...

BE STILL, SHIZUNE!

LET'S JUST KILL THEM RIGHT HERE AND NOW! OROCHIMARU'S WEAKENED!

LADY TSUNADE !!

IT'S OUR BEST CHANCE! LADY TSUNADE... TOGETHER WE CAN TAKE THEM ON...!

SO PLEASE HAVE TWO PEOPLE PREPARED ON YOUR END...

...OH AND JUST SO YOU KNOW, THIS FORBIDDEN JUTSU REQUIRES LIVE SACRIFICES...

LADY TSUNADE...

...

PTT PTT

KRNCH

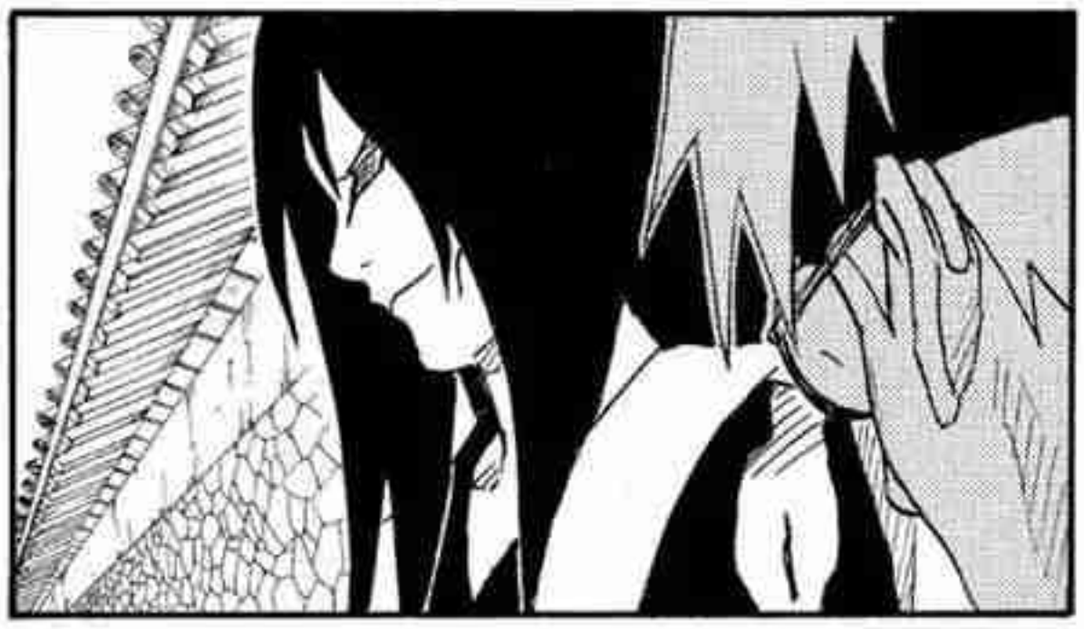
...

TWITCH

TWITCH

!!

SHVV SHVV
SQZZE!



?!

AS ANOTHER OF THE PRODIGAL THREE... HE KNOWS ABOUT *THAT* TOO, HUH...
GRR... DARN...

...I KNOW TSUNADE'S WEAKNESSES, TOO...
I MAY BE WEAKENED... BUT...

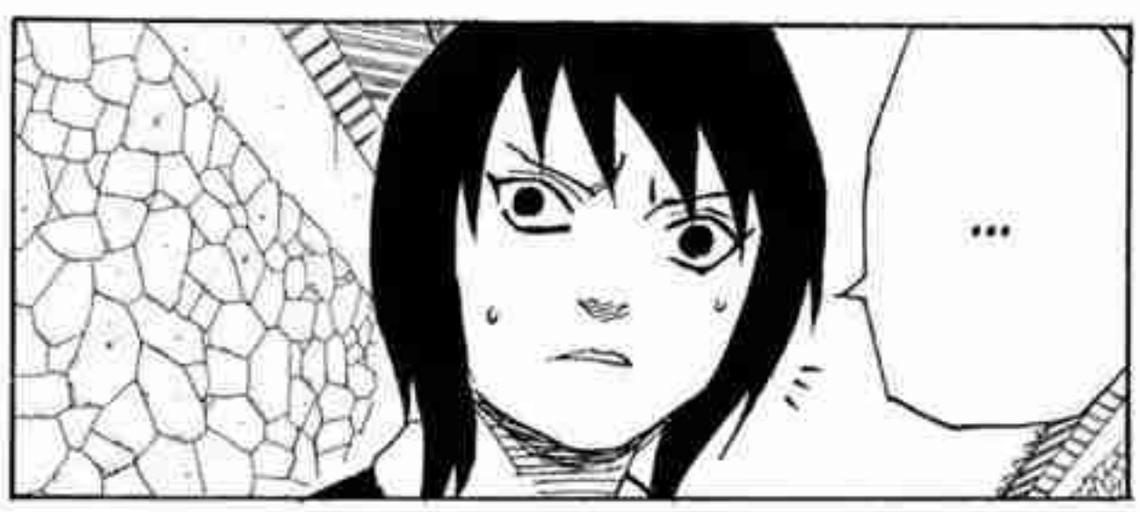
...YOUR FEAR OF BLOOD...
IT HASN'T FADED YET, EH...

HEMO-PHOBIA ...?!
...!

...

...SHALL WE GET GOING, KABUTO?

...I EXPECT A FAVORABLE RESPONSE.
TSUNADE...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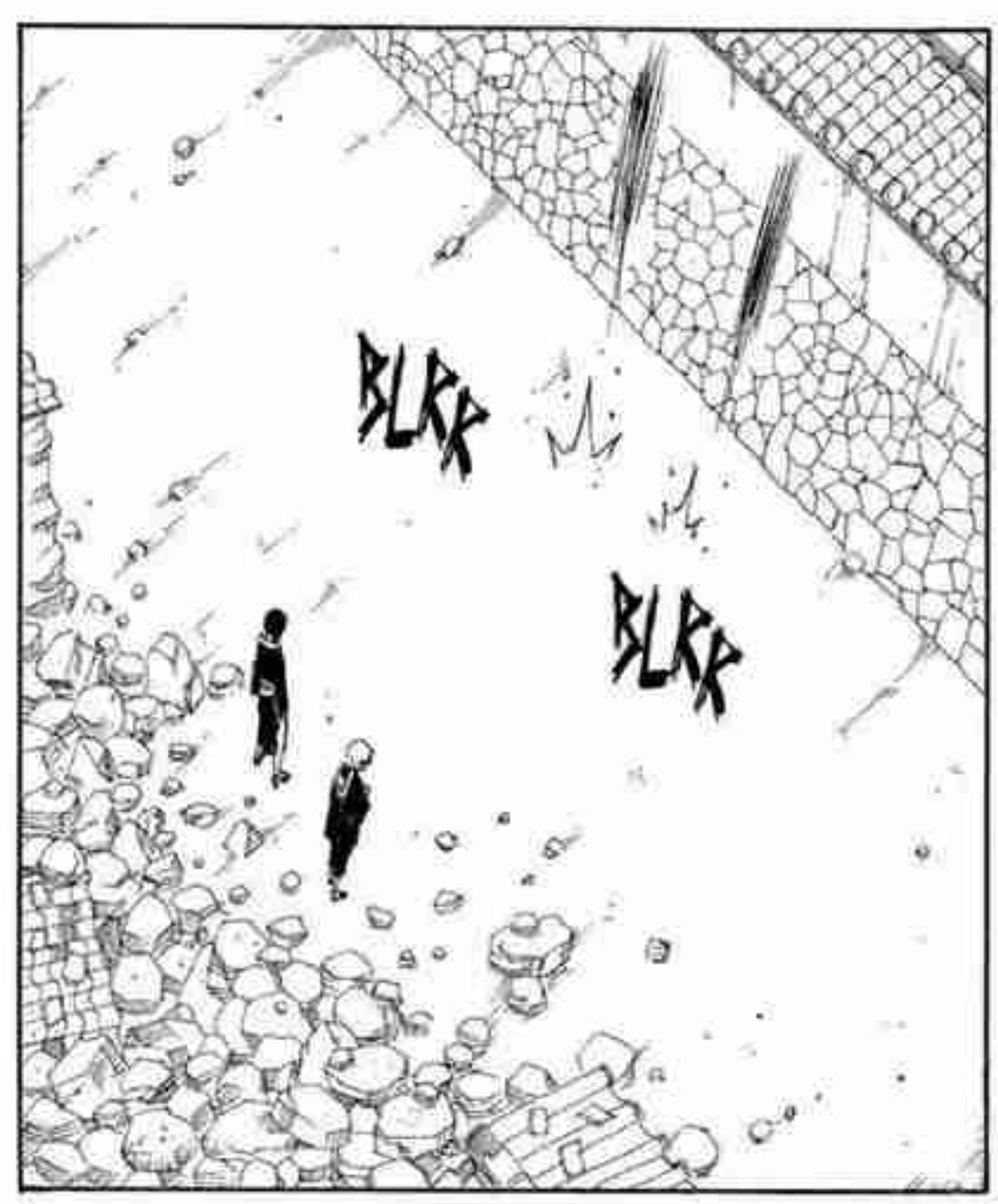

BLRR
BLRR

SHVV SHVV

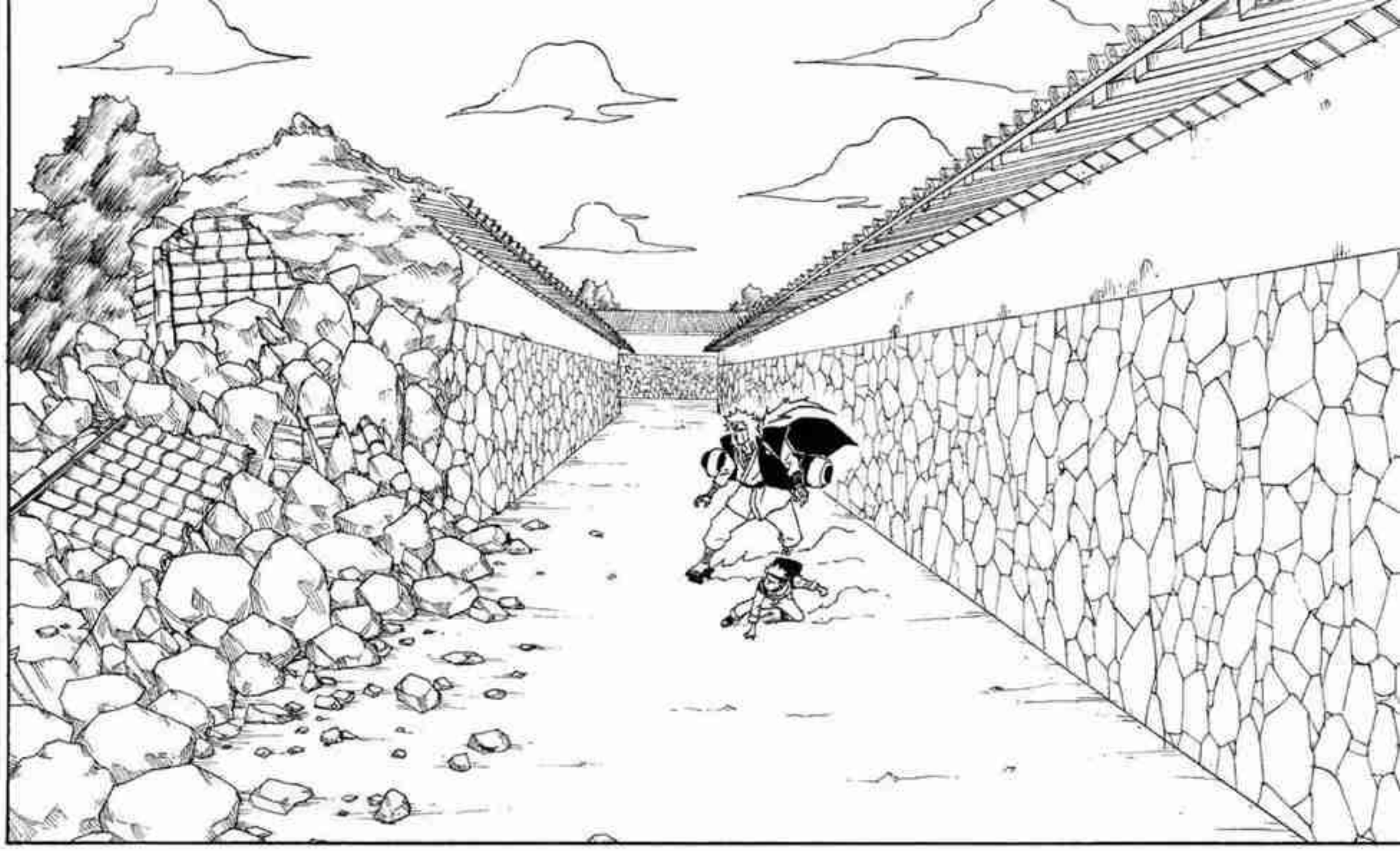
KLAKK

VOOSH
VOOSH

油
!

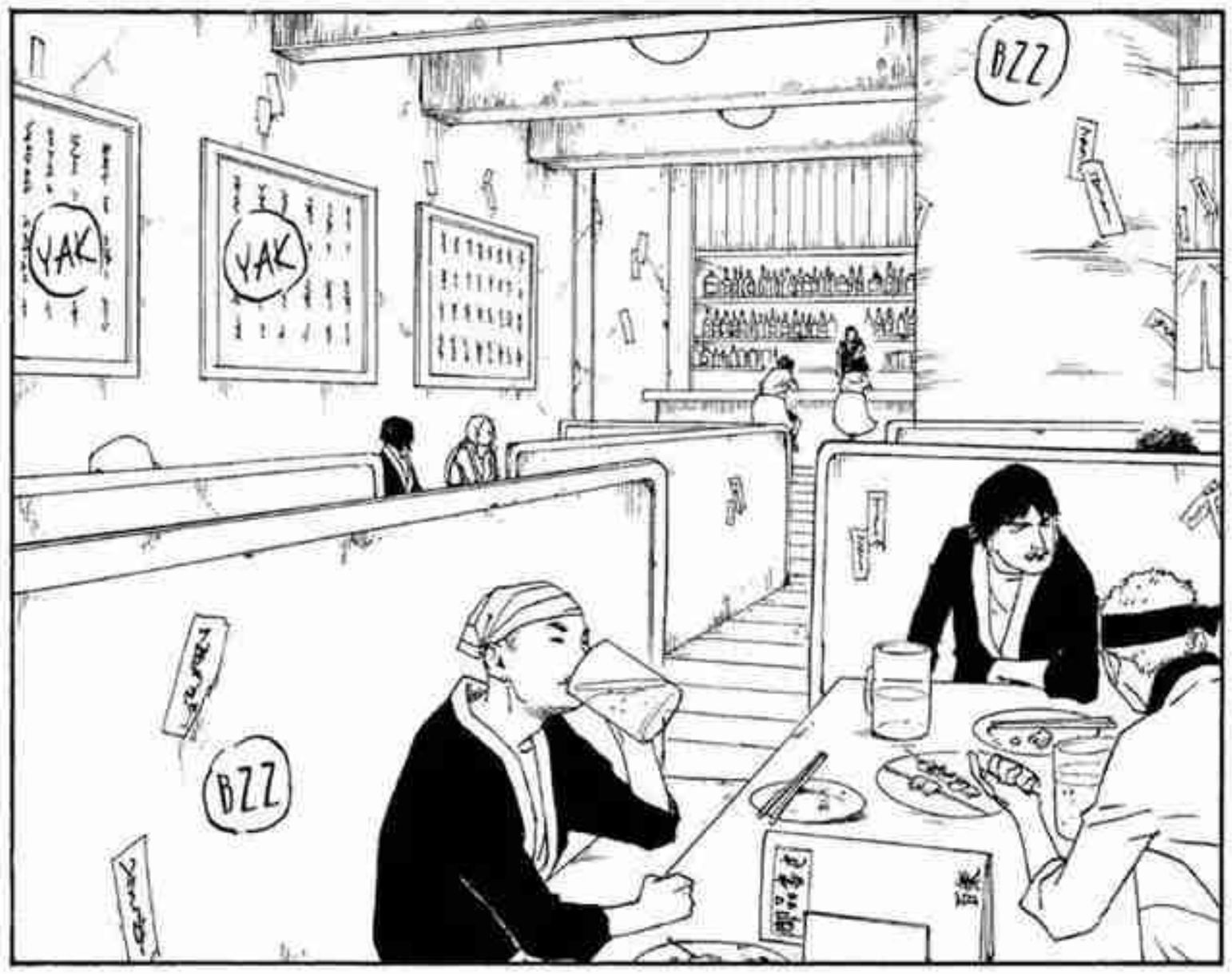
SCREEEEECH

KLNKH



HMM, DID THE SNAKE DO THIS TOO?!
C'MON, NARUTO, LET'S GO.

...
LOOKS LIKE WE MISSED THE PARTY...

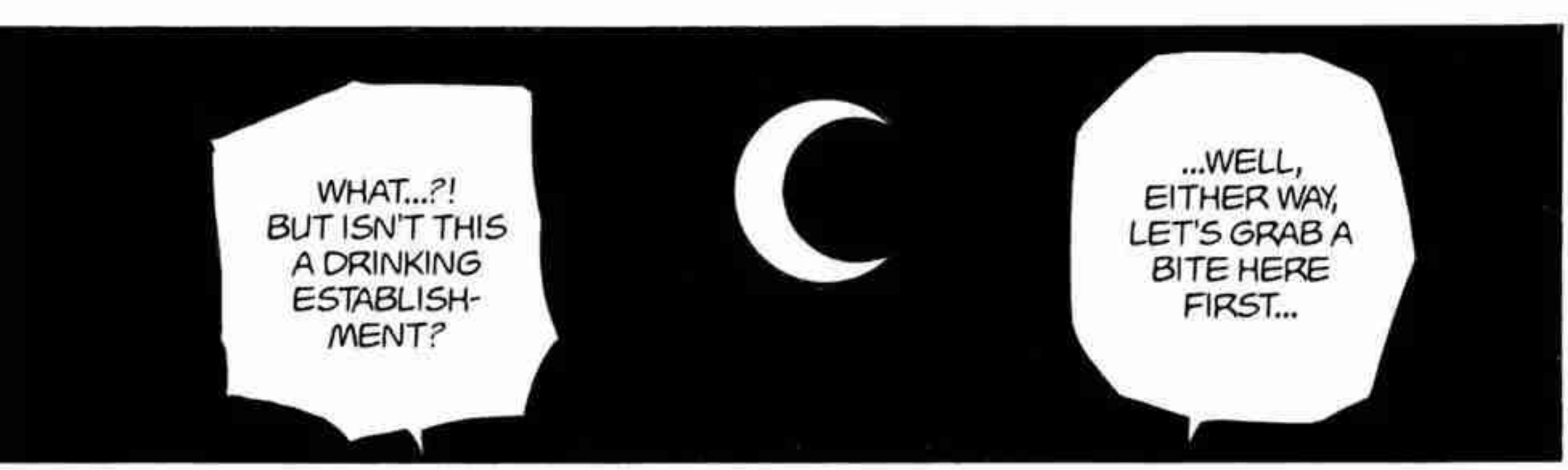

YAK
YAK
BZZZ
BZZ

酒
居酒屋
百薬
薬
WEL-COME!

...
URP...

LADY TSUNADE... YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH ALREADY!
YO, MISTER! 'NOTHER!
SHOOKA-SHOOKA

...LADY TSUNADE...


WHAT...?! BUT ISN'T THIS A DRINKING ESTABLISH-MENT?
...WELL, EITHER WAY, LET'S GRAB A BITE HERE FIRST...

!
OH!

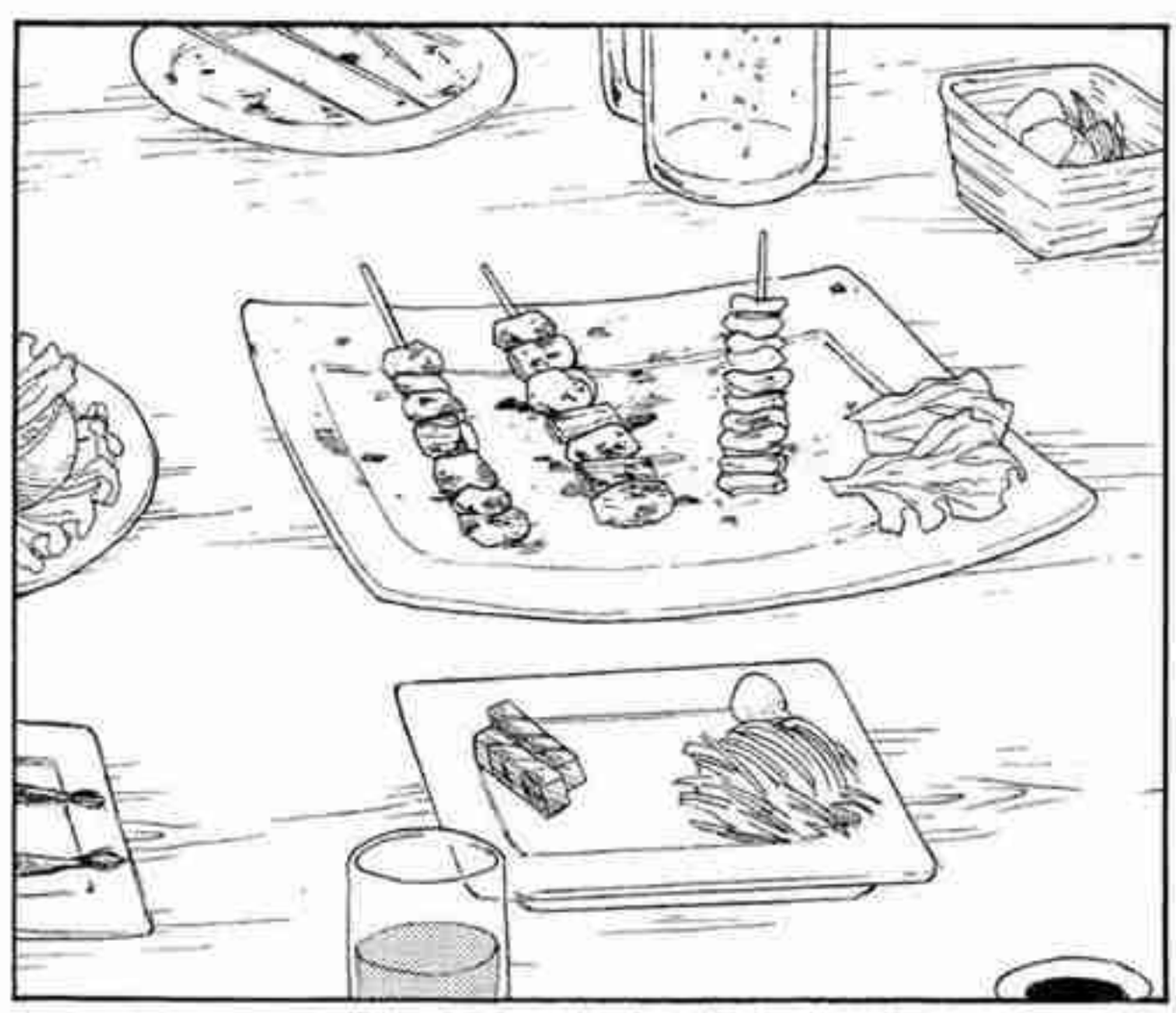
KID...THIS IS THE BEST PLACE TO GATHER NEWS...

TSUNADE!

JIRAIYA ...?!

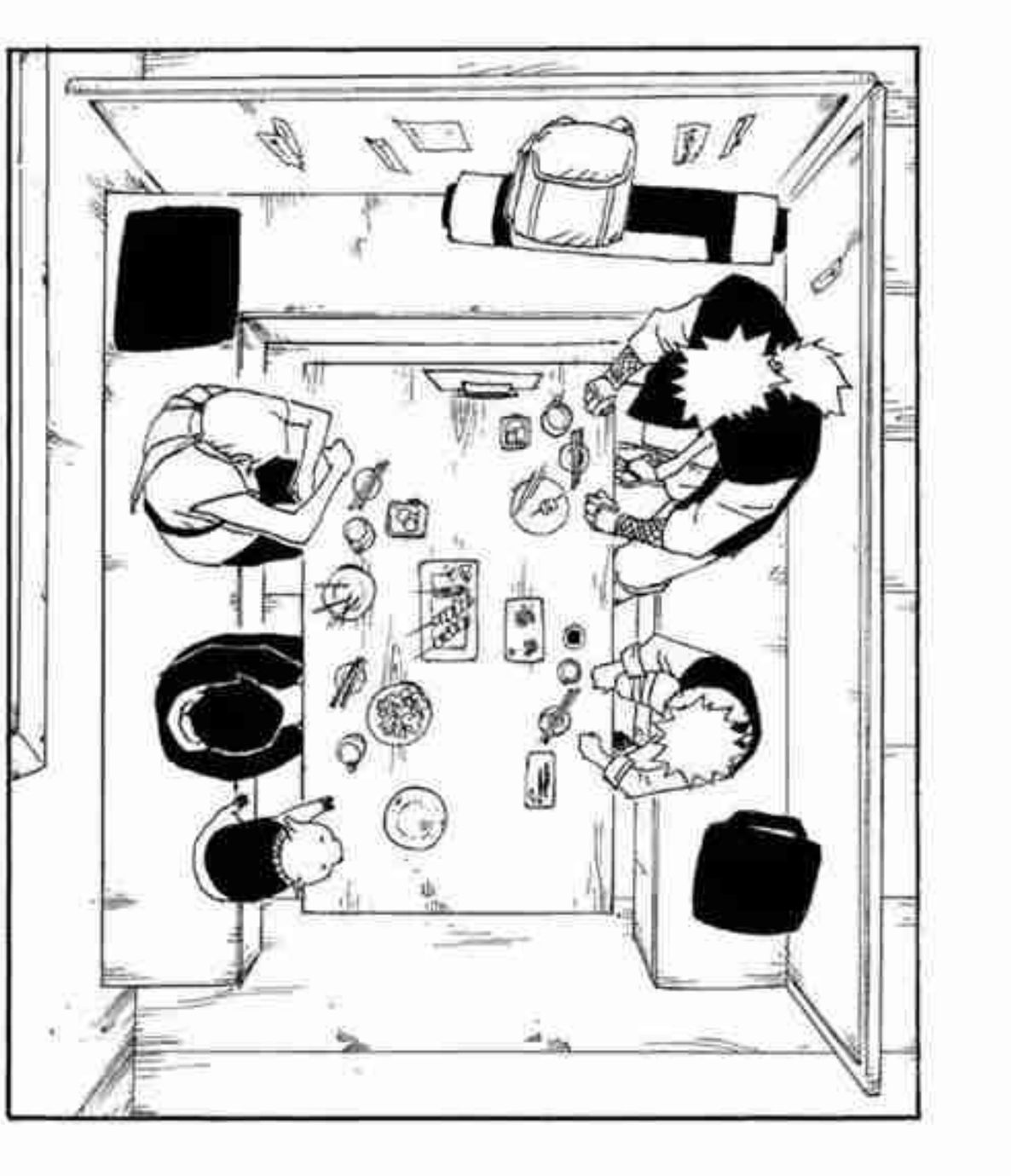
!

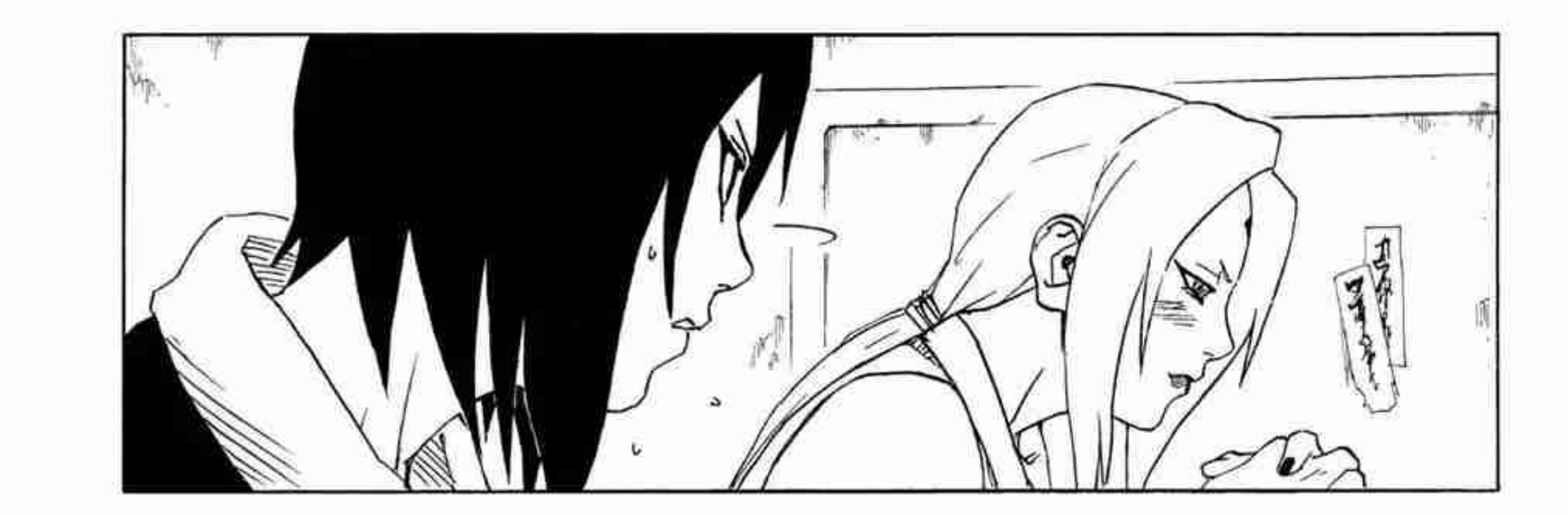
!

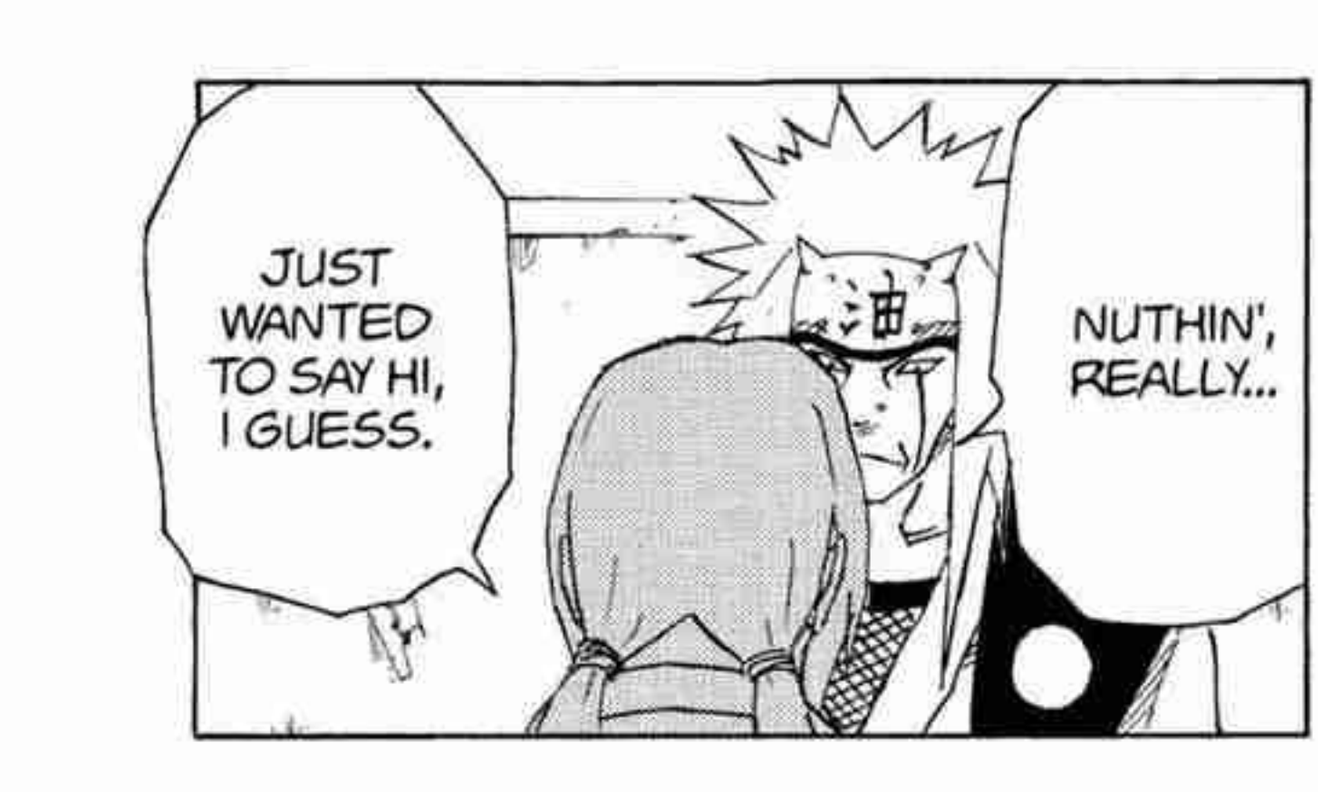


READ
THIS
WAY

'BEEN SEEING A LOT OF FAMILIAR FACES TODAY.
...OROCHI-MARU, RIGHT? ...SO WHAT'S UP?



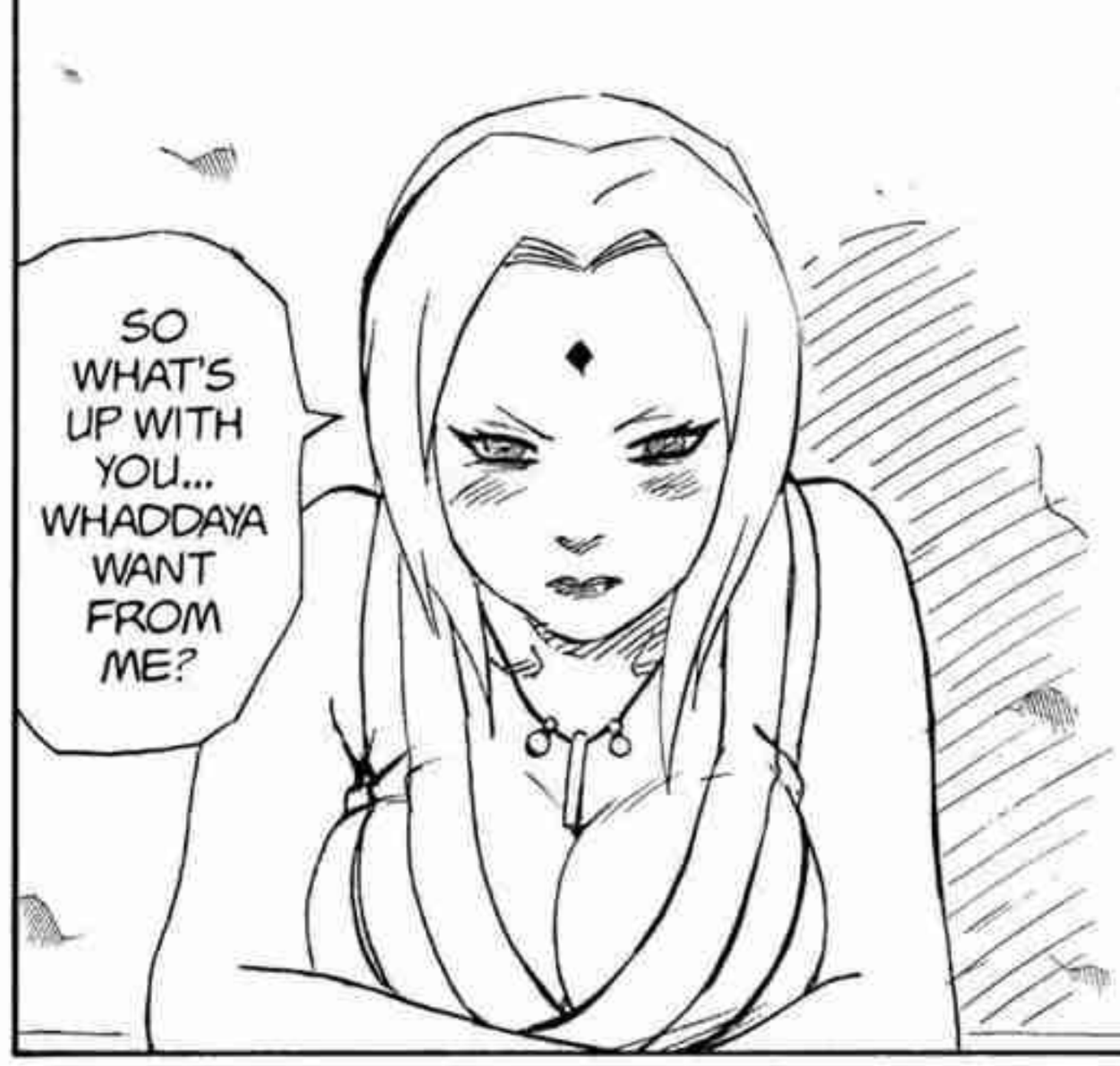



JUST WANTED TO SAY HI, I GUESS.
NUTHIN', REALLY...

GRRRR

...

THEY SAY SHE'S A FEMALE NINJA WHO CAN HEAL ANY INJURY... IS IT REALLY TRUE?
SCARE SCARE


SO WHAT'S UP WITH YOU... WHADDAYA WANT FROM ME?

TSUNADE... THE VILLAGE REQUESTS YOU ACCEPT THE TITLE OF FIFTH HOKAGE.
I'LL LAY IT STRAIGHT.

!

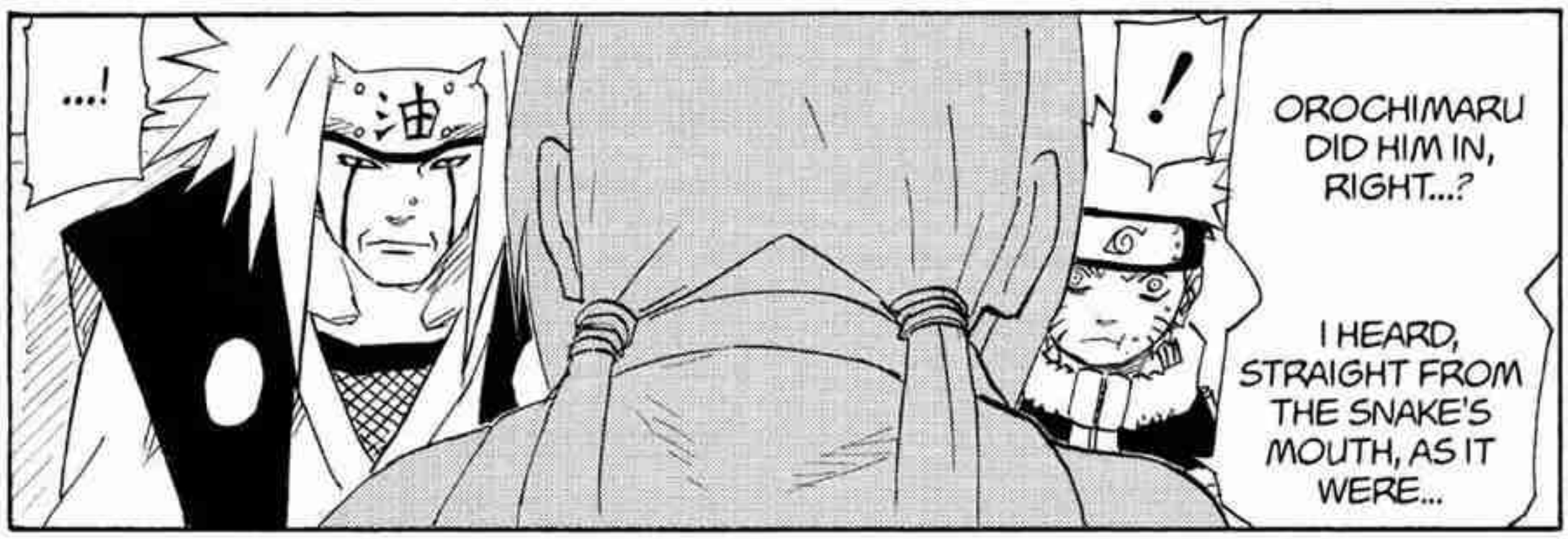
...!

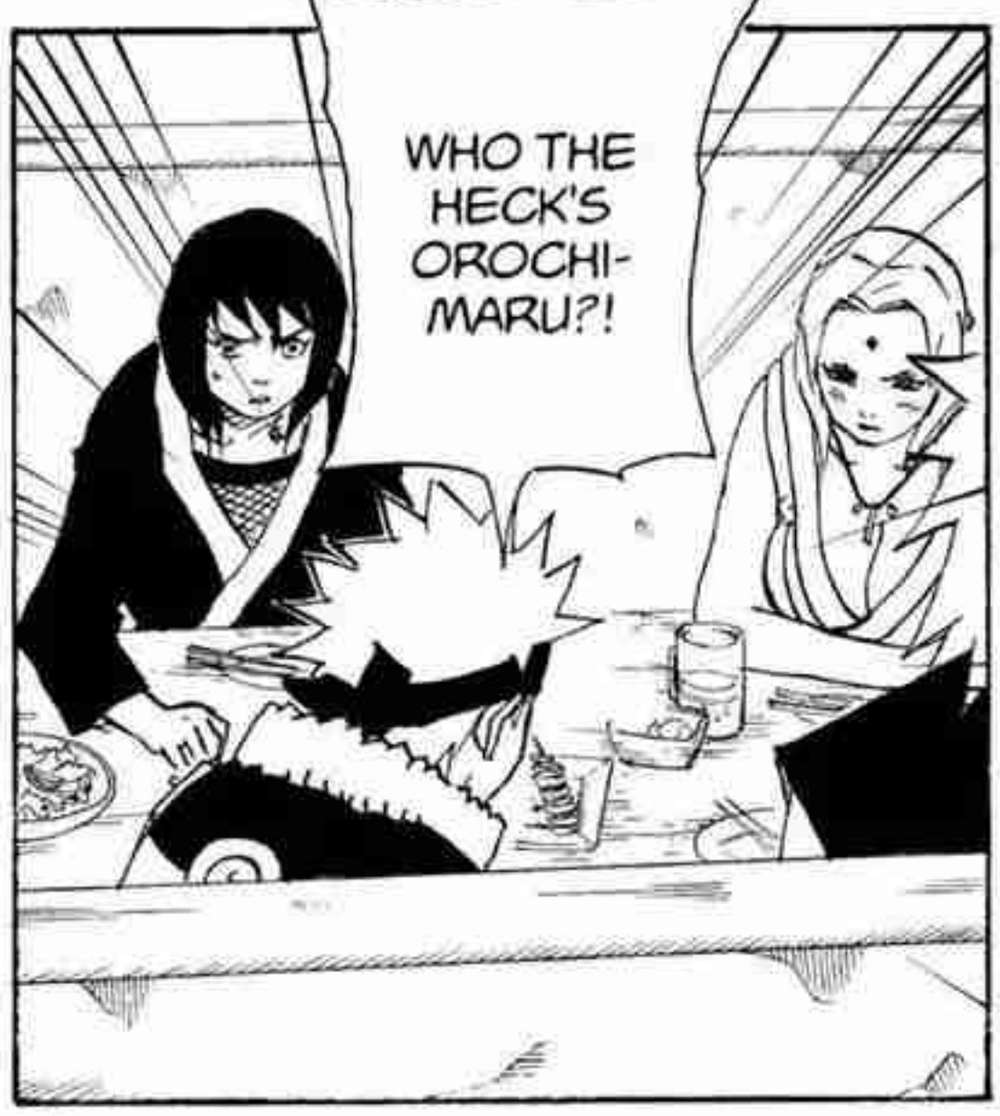
URG!!

DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE THIRD LORD?

LORD THIRD... SO IT WAS TRUE...

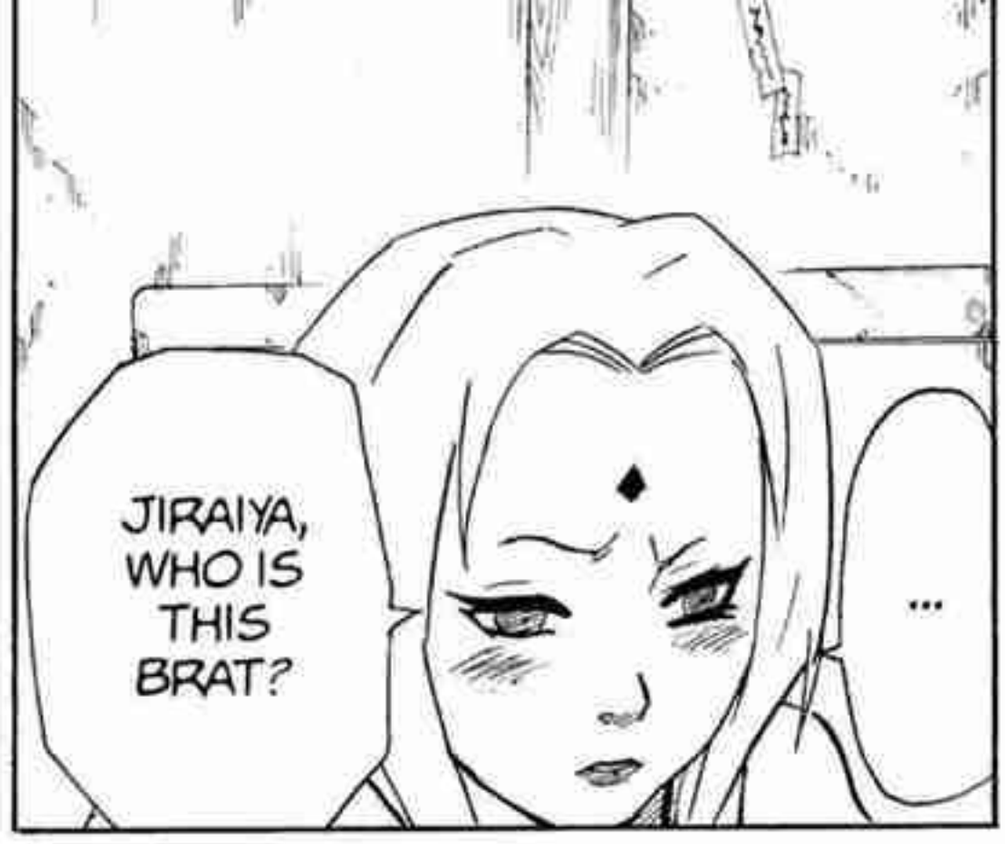
F...FIFTH HOKAGE?!!
HACK! GUGH!
...! WHERE THE HECK DID THAT COME FROM?!! WHAT'S GOING ON?!
THUD THUD


...!
!
OROCHIMARU DID HIM IN, RIGHT...?
I HEARD, STRAIGHT FROM THE SNAKE'S MOUTH, AS IT WERE...

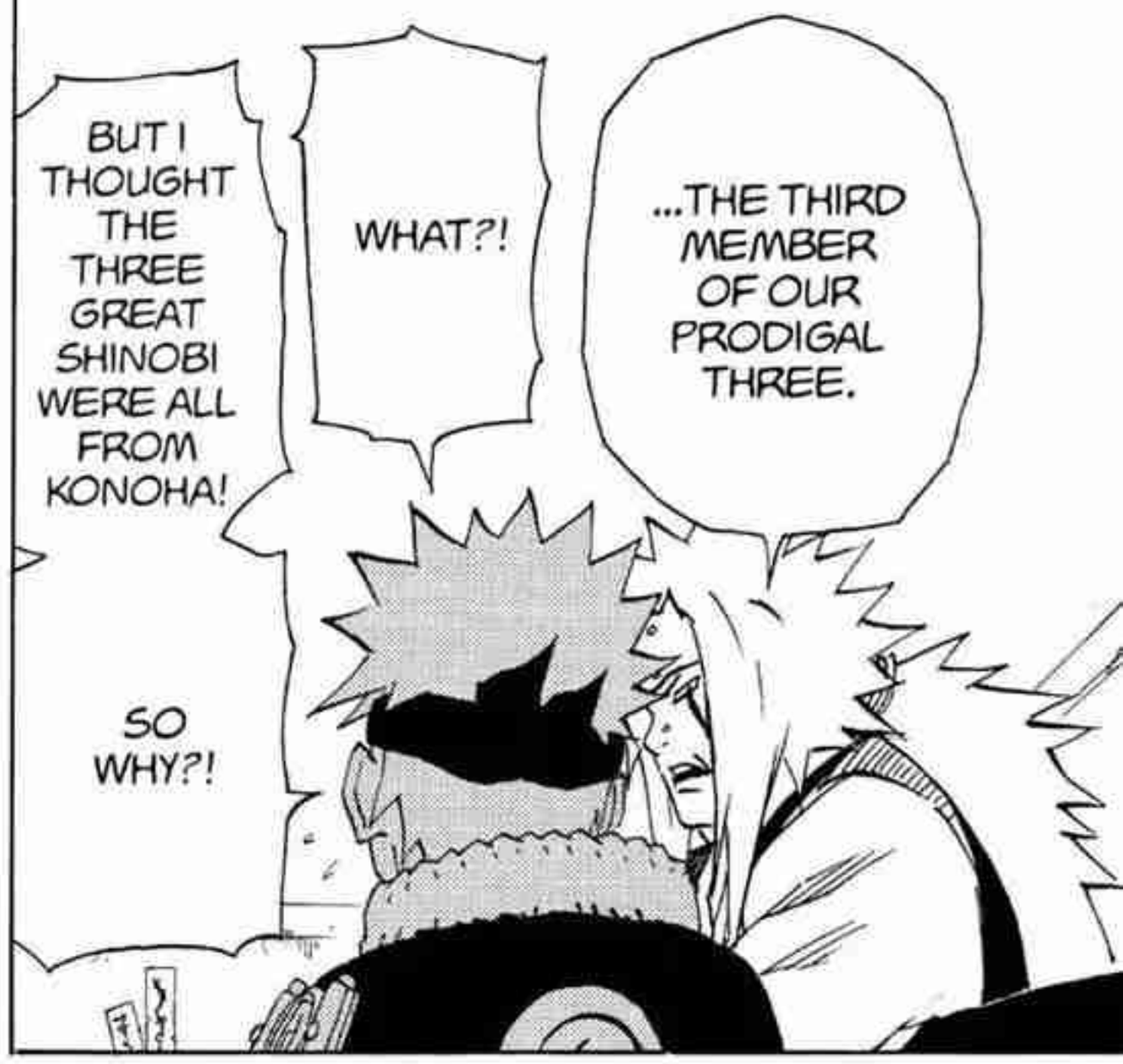

WHO THE HECK'S OROCHI-MARU?!

HE KILLED THE THIRD HOKAGE ?!
OROCHI-MARU...?!

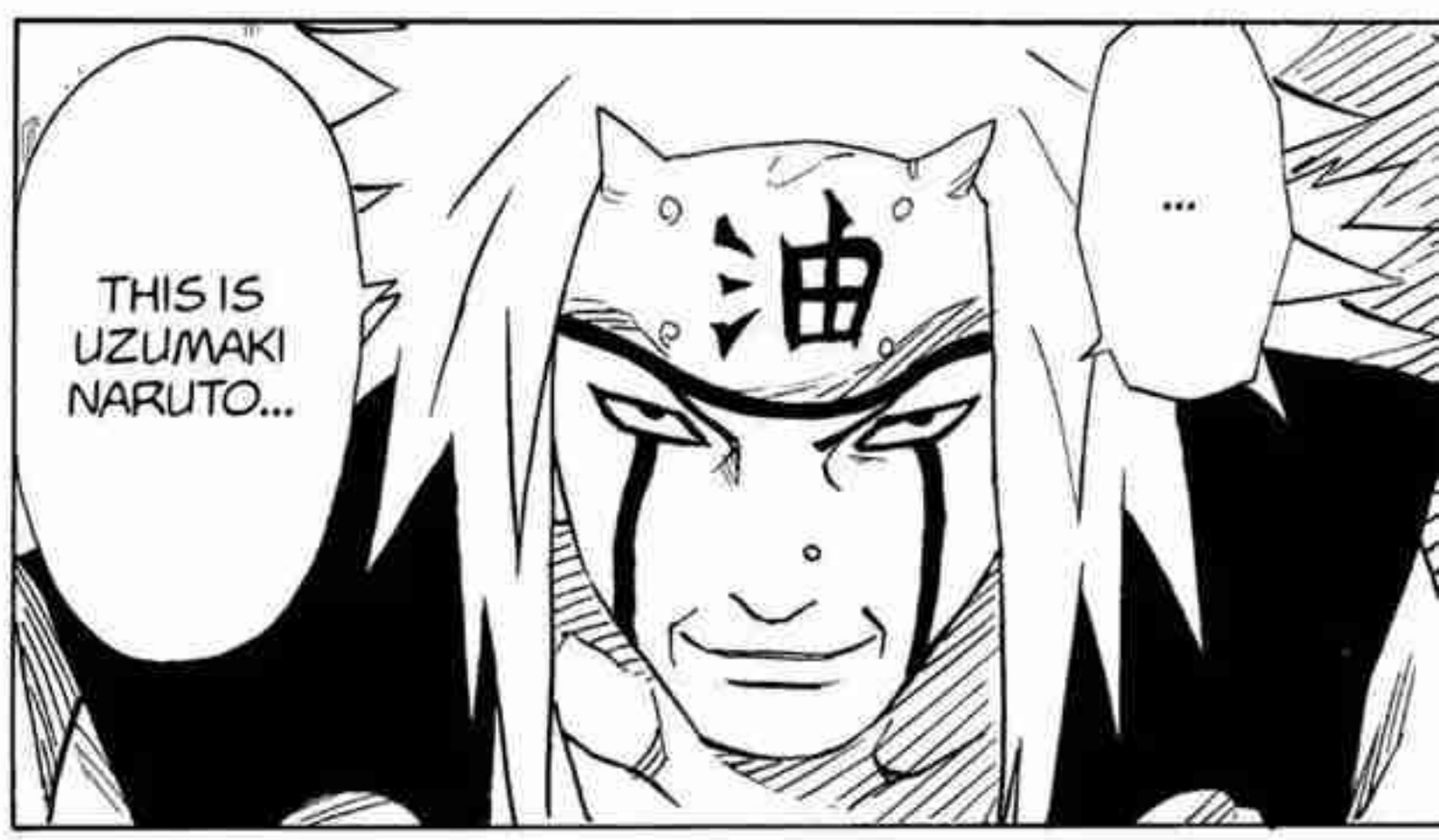
...OROCHI-MARU DID IT...?
...?!!


JIRAIYA, WHO IS THIS BRAT?
...

GRR

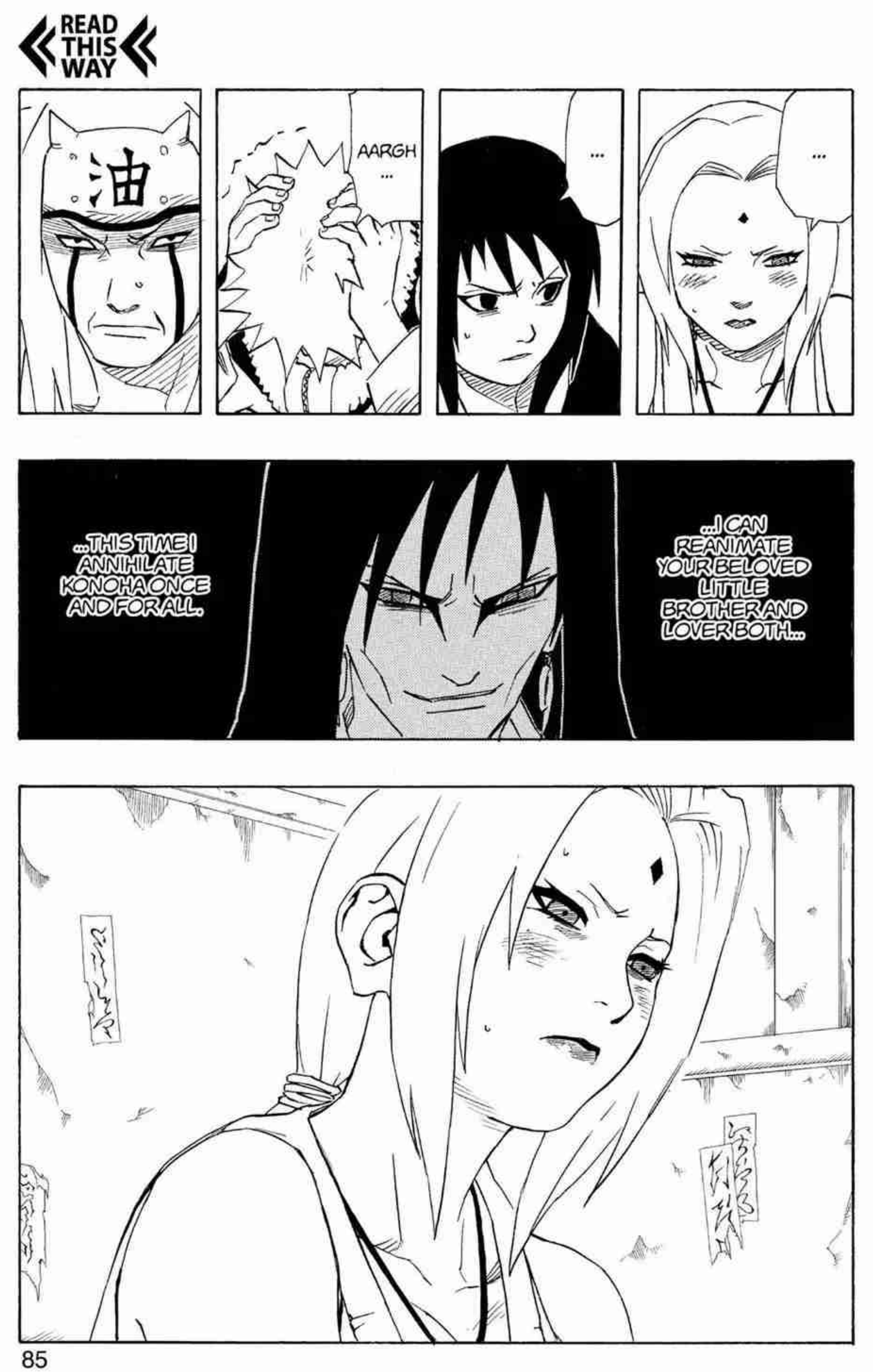

BUT I THOUGHT THE THREE GREAT SHINOBI WERE ALL FROM KONOHA!
WHAT?!
...THE THIRD MEMBER OF OUR PRODIGAL THREE.
SO WHY?!

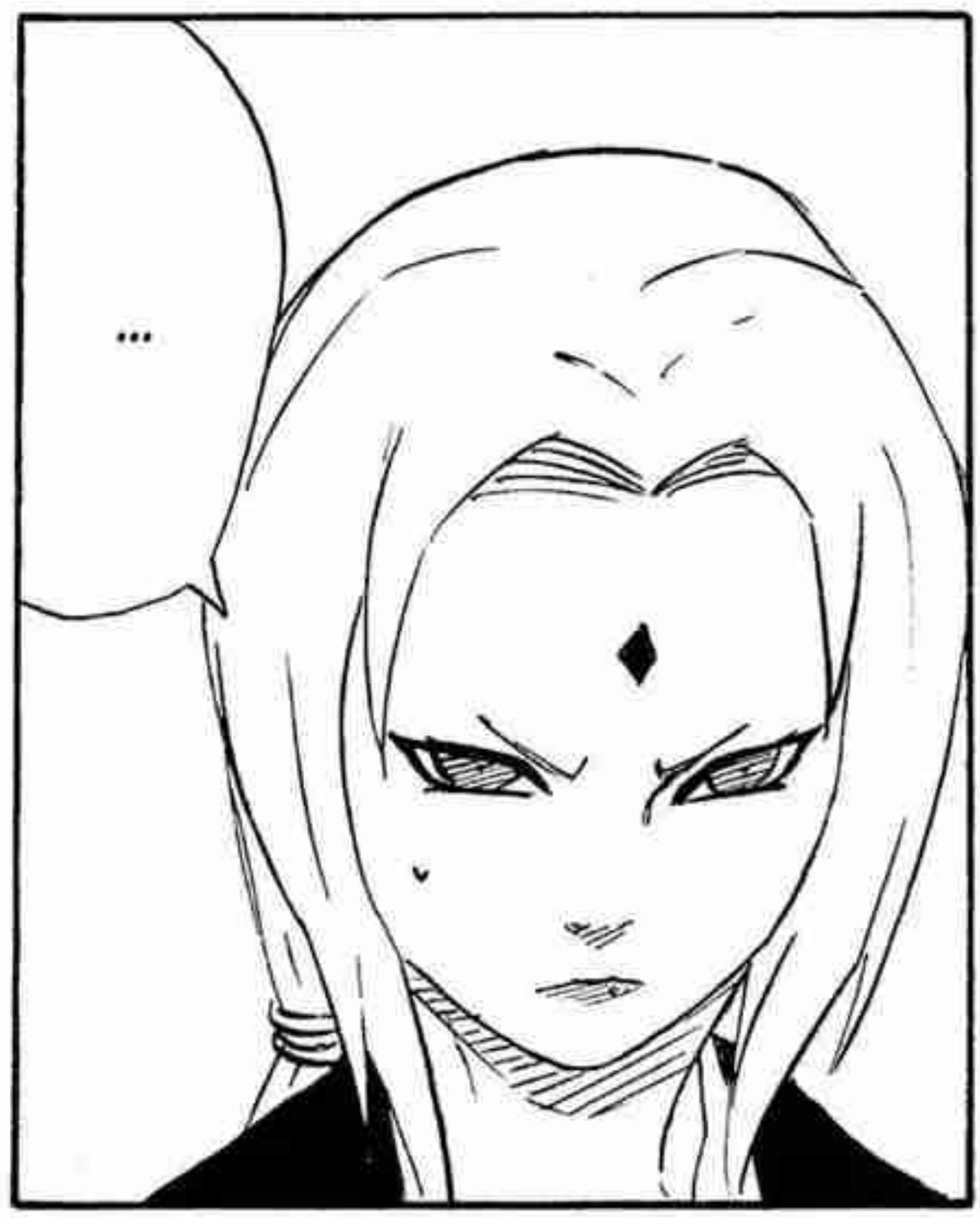
SO THIS LAD...HAS THE NINE-TAILS...
!


THIS IS UZUMAKI NARUTO...
...

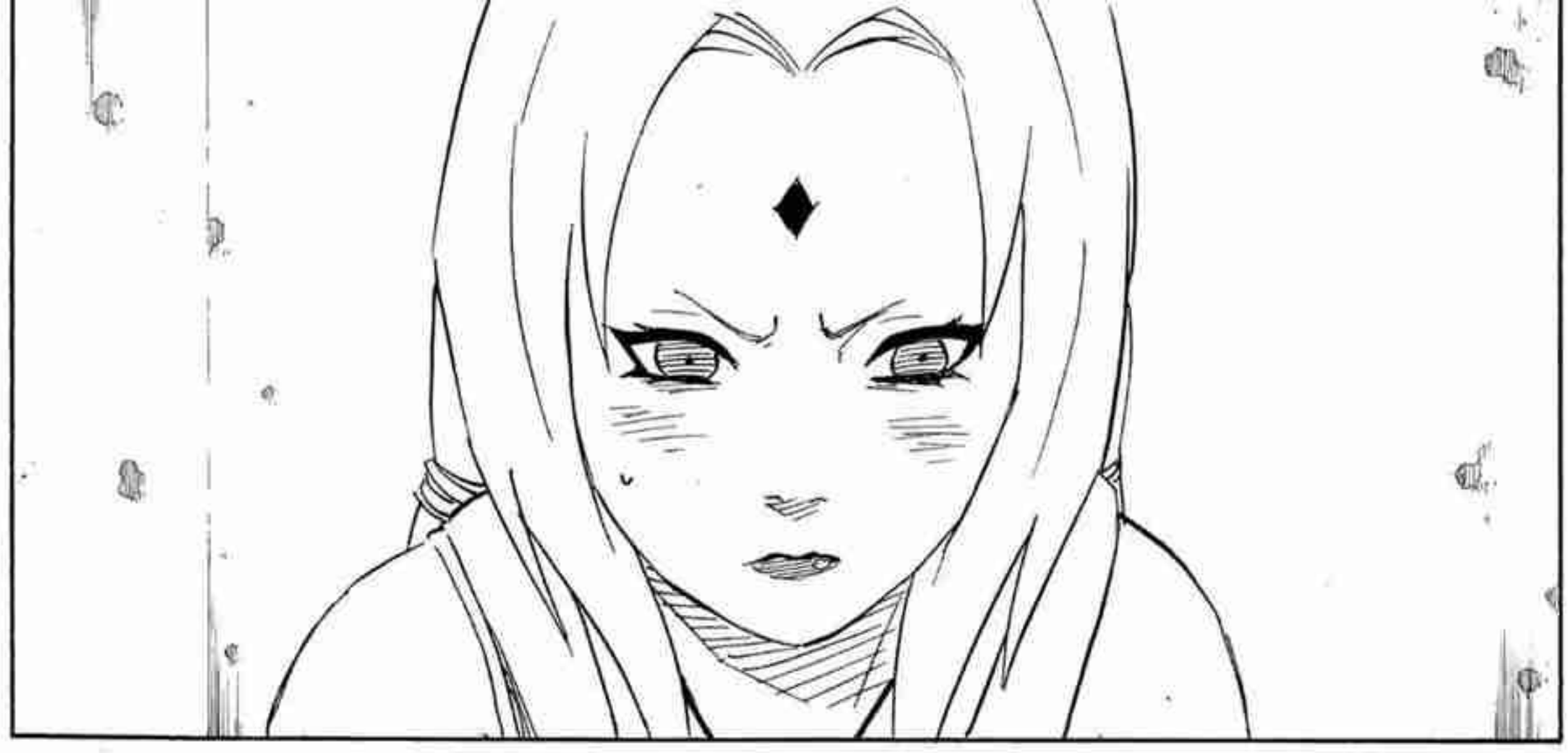
WELL? DO YOU ACCEPT?
...SO!

JUST HUSH UP, NARUTO!
...AND WHY HER FOR FIFTH HOKAGE?!


READ THIS WAY
油
AARGH ...
...
...
...THIS TIME I ANNIHILATE KONOHA ONCE AND FOR ALL.
...I CAN REANIMATE YOUR BELOVED LITTLE BROTHER AND LOVER BOTH...



Number 158: No Forgiveness...II



AARGH ...

LADY TSUNADE...
...

WELL, TSU-NADE?

NO THANKS!
...SORRY...

READ
THIS
WAY

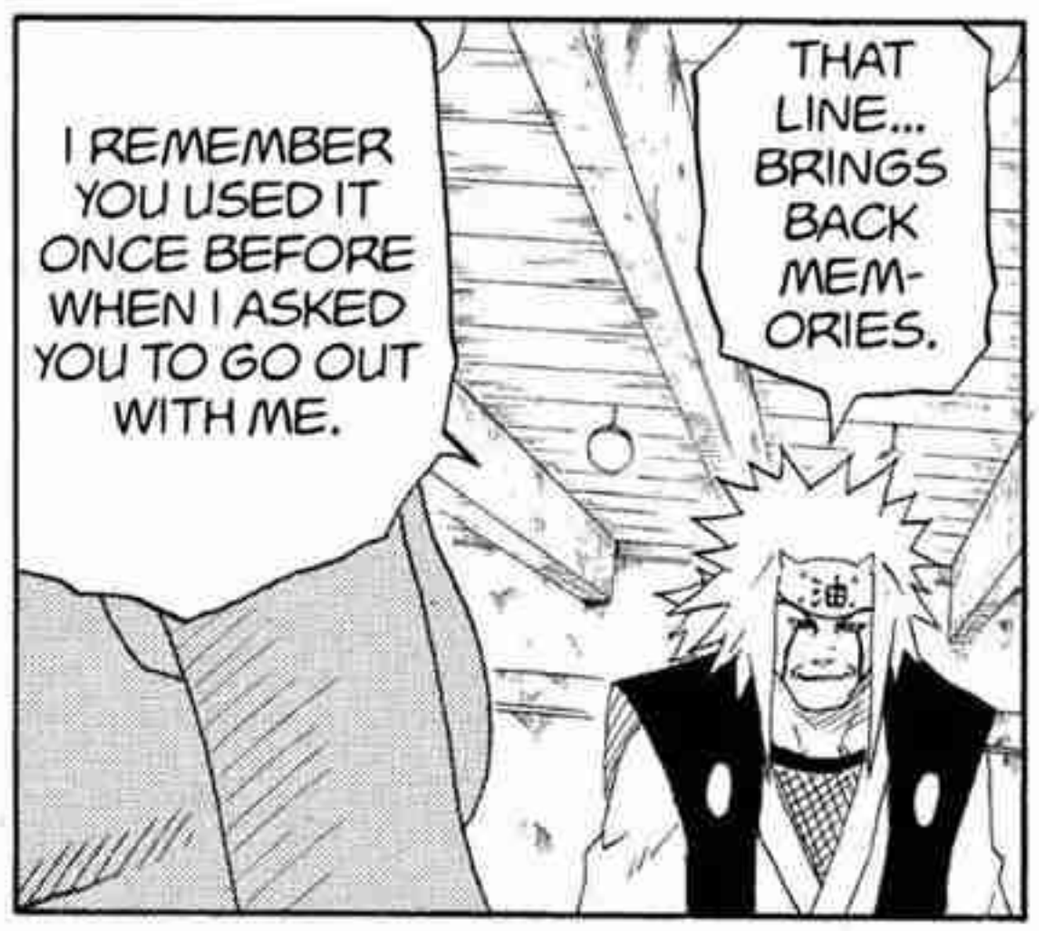
!

!

!

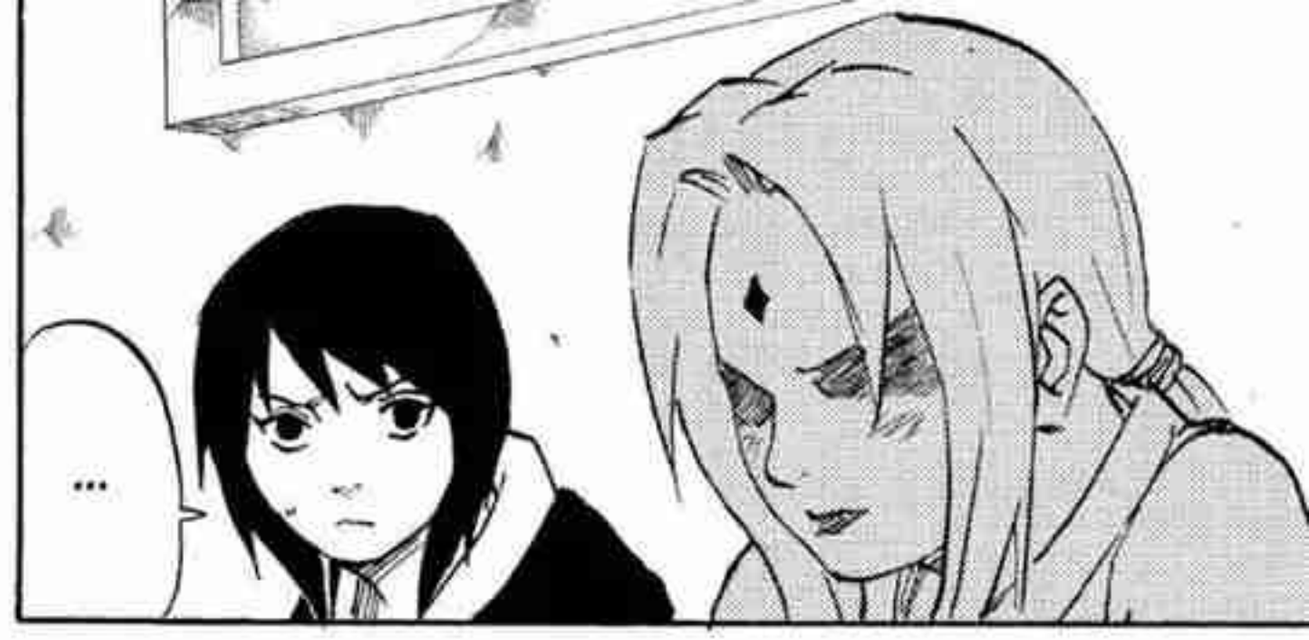
!

SO WHAT WAS ALL THAT ABOUT IN THE BEGINNING ABOUT SOME RESEARCH, EH?!
AARGH ...
WHAT THE HECK'S GOING ON?!


I REMEMBER YOU USED IT ONCE BEFORE WHEN I ASKED YOU TO GO OUT WITH ME.
THAT LINE... BRINGS BACK MEM-ORIES.

WHERE DID THIS HOKAGE THING COME FROM?!
...AND WORSE! SHE TURNED IT DOWN!!
YOU KNOW WHAT, I DON'T CARE! WE'RE GOING TO DRAG HER BACK WITH US TO THE VILLAGE AND HAVE HER FIX SASUKE AND MASTER KAKASHI, RIGHT?!

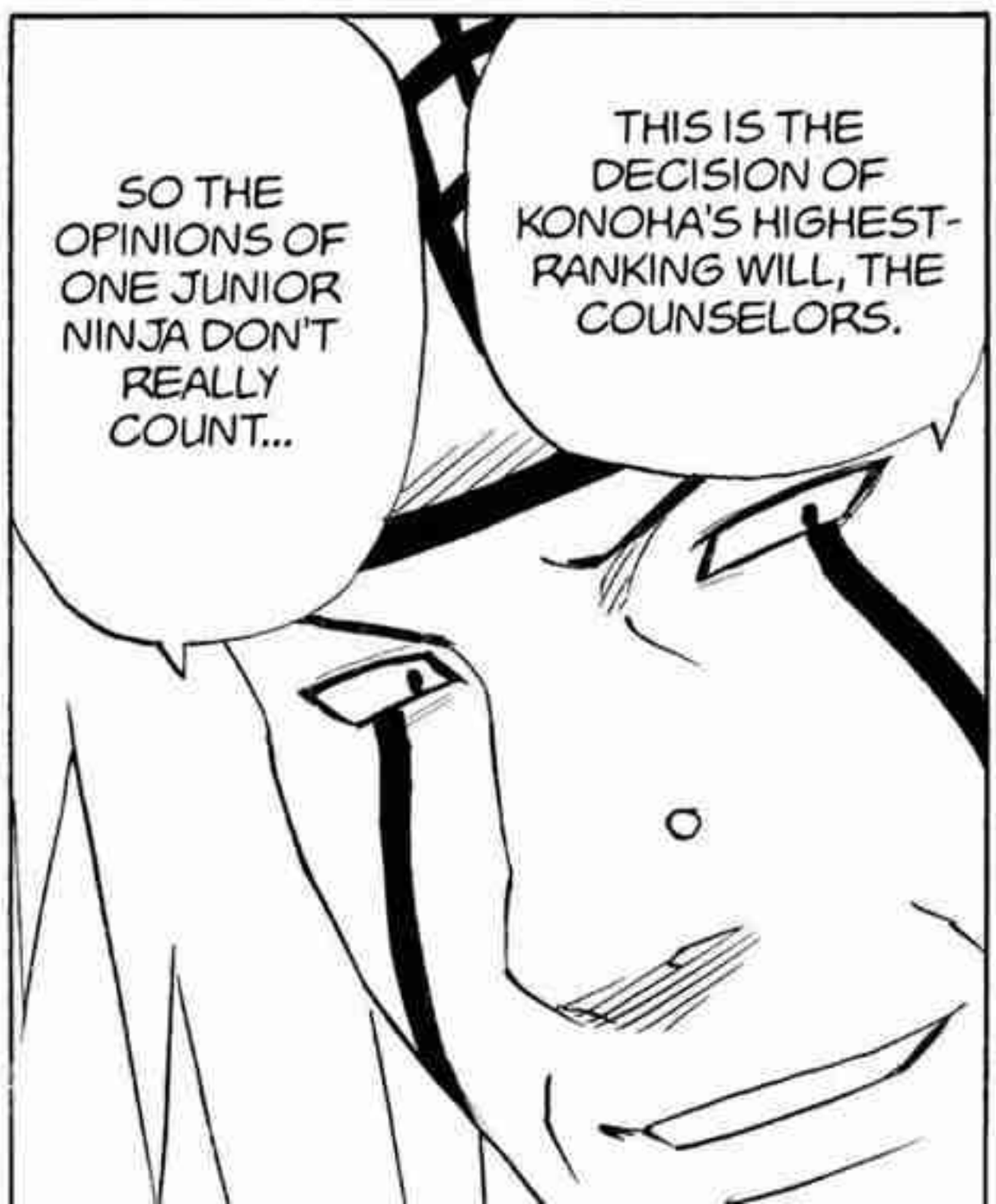
TSUNADE'S THE ONLY POSSIBLE CHOICE FOR THE FIFTH HOKAGE...
CALM YOURSELF.


...

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE CONSIDERING ACCEPTING OROCHIMARU'S OFFER...
...LADY TSUNADE...

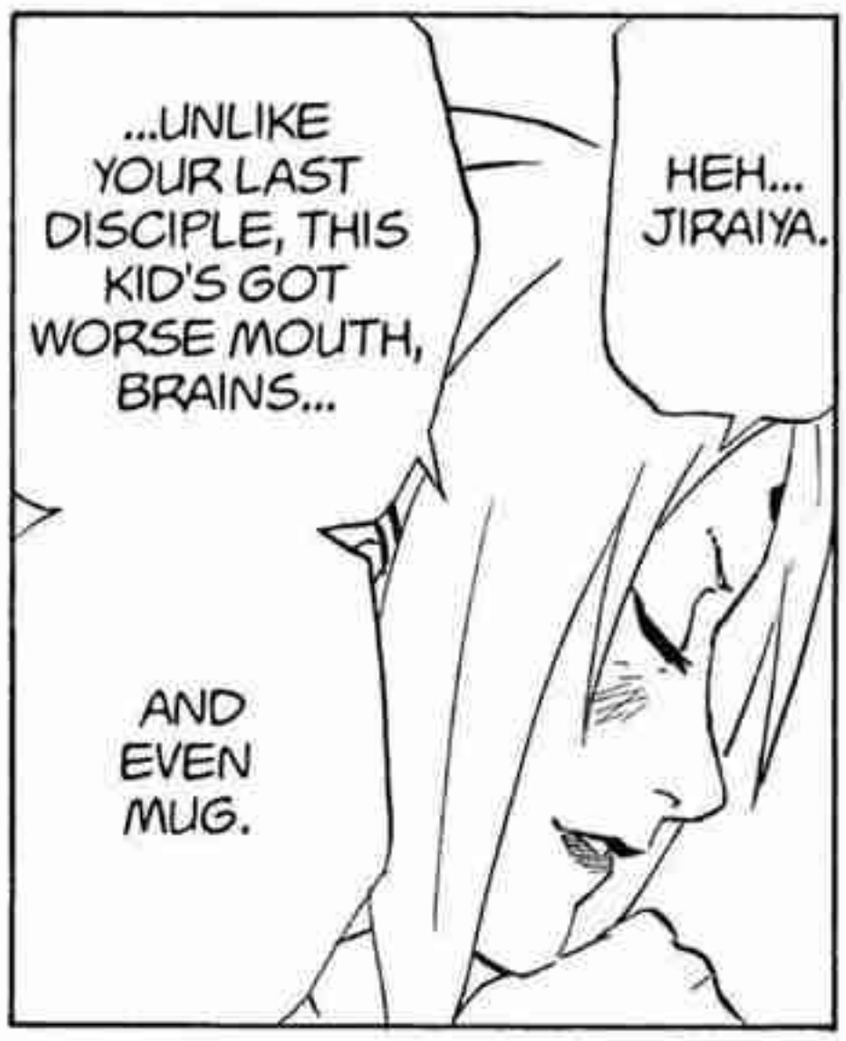
!

FURTHERMORE, TSUNADE IS THE GRAND-DAUGHTER OF THE FIRST HOKAGE, SO SHE IS A KONOHA SHINOBI OF A MOST WORTHY BLOODLINE...
NOT ONLY DID SHE CONTRIBUTE GREATLY TOWARDS KONOHA'S VICTORY DURING THE TURBULENT ERA OF GREAT WAR...
BUT THERE ARE STILL NONE WHO CAN STAND SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH HER IN REGARDS TO BATTLE OR MEDICAL JUTSU.


SO THE OPINIONS OF ONE JUNIOR NINJA DON'T REALLY COUNT...
THIS IS THE DECISION OF KONOHA'S HIGHEST-RANKING WILL, THE COUNSELORS.

AND THEN, LIKE YOU SAID...
IF SHE WOULD JUST AGREE TO BECOME HOKAGE, WE CAN GO HOME.
WE CAN HAVE HER TAKE A LOOK AT SASUKE AND KAKASHI.

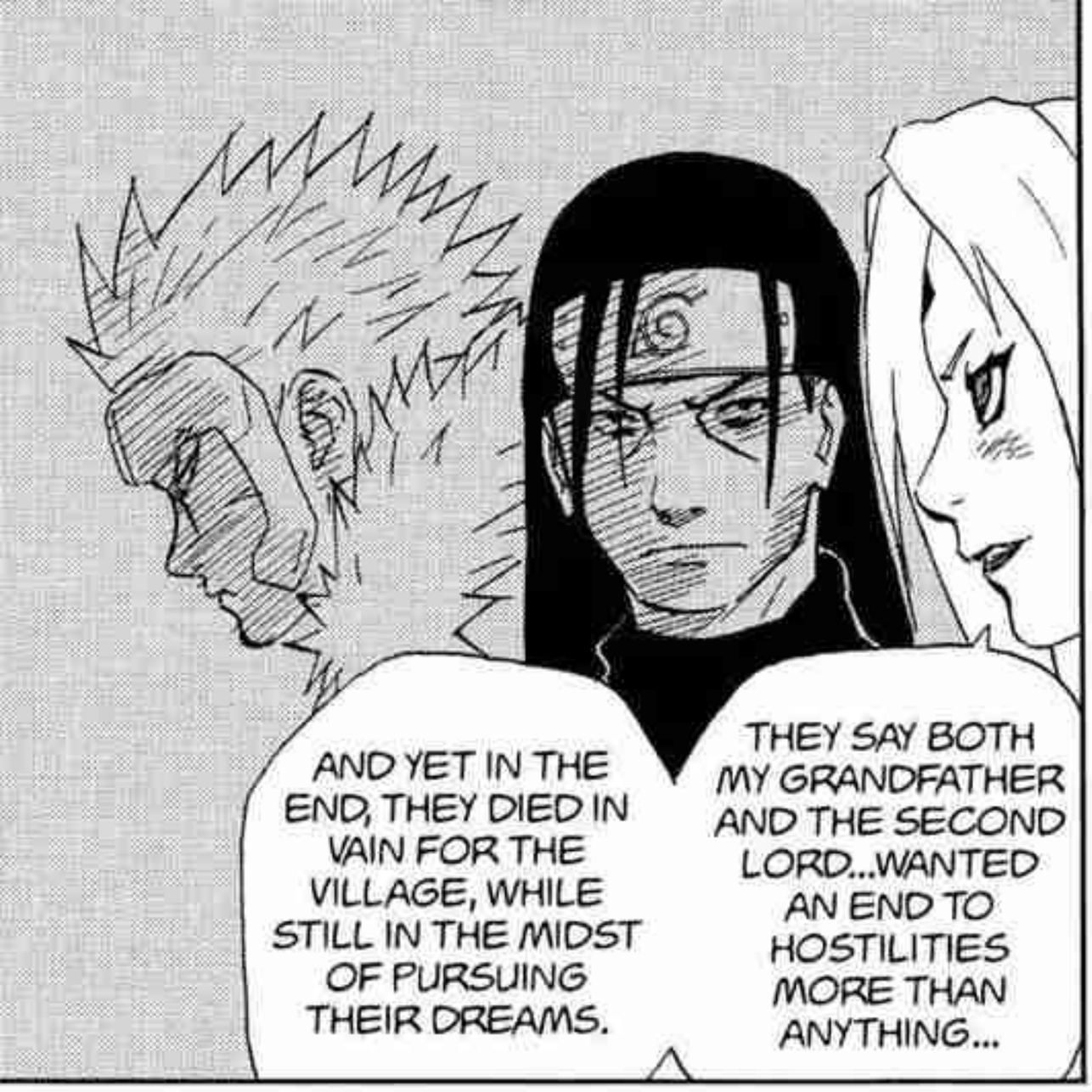
AW, COME ON, EVERYBODY PALES IN COMPARISON TO THE FOURTH LORD.
WHAT ?!


...UNLIKE YOUR LAST DISCIPLE, THIS KID'S GOT WORSE MOUTH, BRAINS...
AND EVEN MUG.
HEH... JIRAIYA.

HMPH

HE WAS OVERFLOWING WITH TALENT FOR JUTSU AND INTELLIGENCE... HE WAS SOCIALLY POPULAR...AND WELL, HE WAS QUITE A LOOKER, JUST LIKE ME.
AS A SHINOBI, HIS CAPACITY WAS UNPARALLELED, A TRUE ONE-OF-A-KIND...

...BUT EVEN WITH ALL THAT GOING FOR HIM, HE DIED PREMATURELY...


AND YET IN THE END, THEY DIED IN VAIN FOR THE VILLAGE, WHILE STILL IN THE MIDST OF PURSUING THEIR DREAMS.
THEY SAY BOTH MY GRANDFATHER AND THE SECOND LORD...WANTED AN END TO HOSTILITIES MORE THAN ANYTHING...

TIME CHANGES PEOPLE.
HUMPH... I AM IN MY FIFTIES, YOU KNOW...
YOU'VE CHANGED, TSUNADE...
I DON'T KNOW IF THESE THOUGHTS HAD BEEN RUNNING THROUGH YOUR MIND THE WHOLE TIME, BUT TO ACTUALLY BE VOICING THEM...

油
FLICK

...

IF A TEETERING GEEZER TRIES TO ACT YOUTHFUL, OF COURSE HE'S GOING TO CROAK!
SAME THING WITH MASTER SARUTOBI...

TWITCH

TWITCH

TWITCH

ONLY A FOOL WOULD TAKE IT.

THE TITLE OF HOKAGE'S A JOKE.

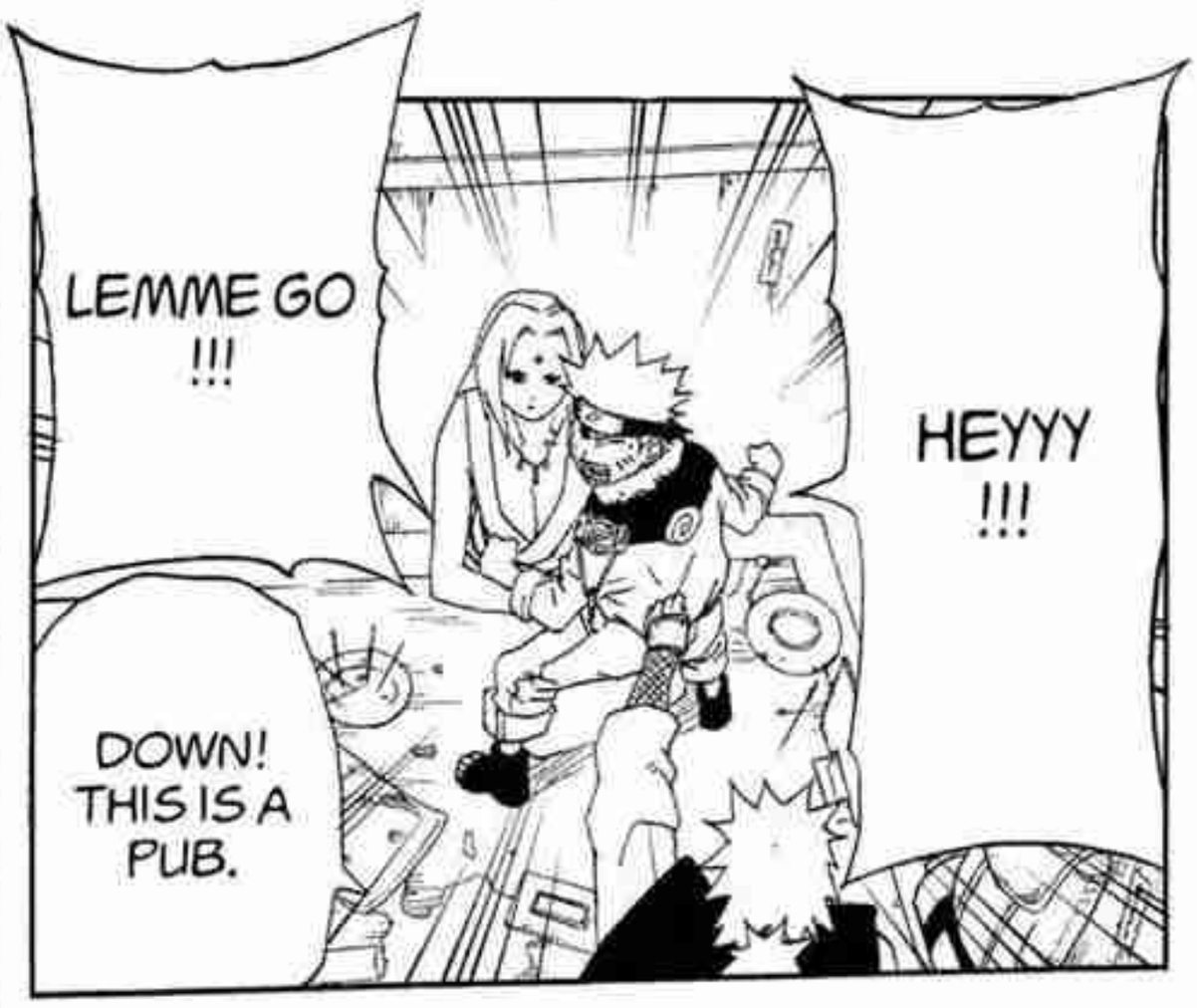
KRASH

STOMP

GGH!

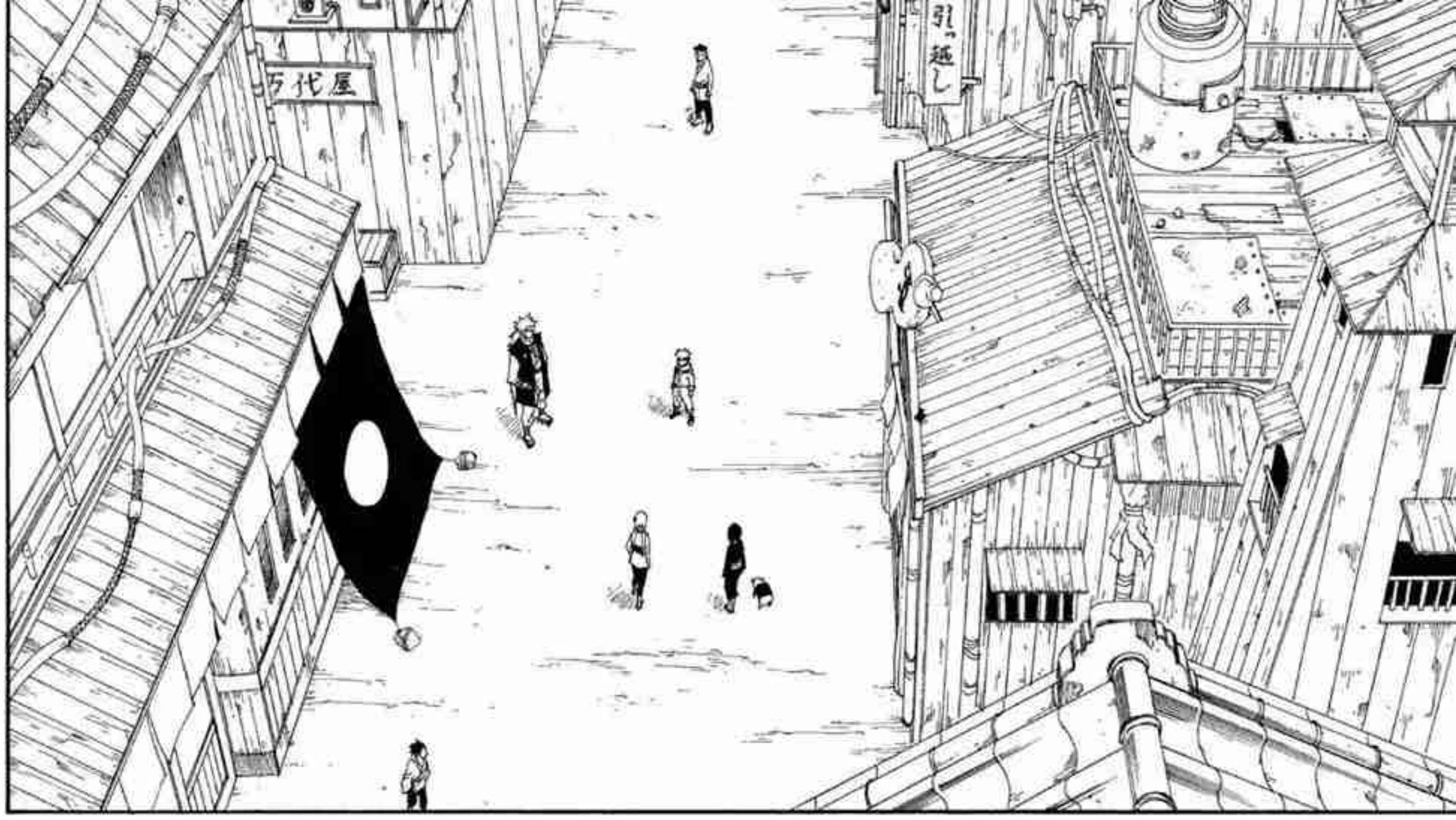
BOING

CHUF



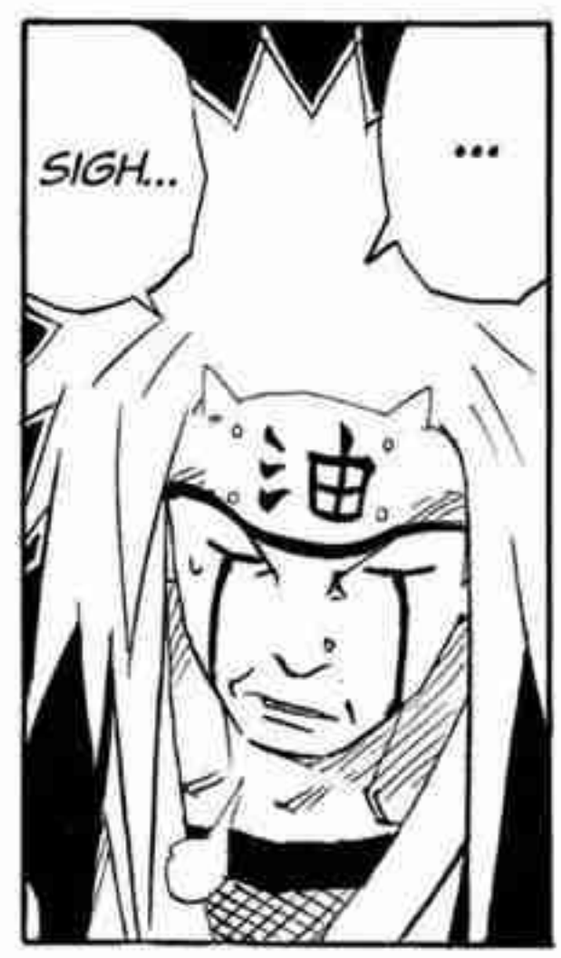
I'LL SLUG YOU WITH ALL I'VE GOT!!!
I DON'T CARE THAT YOU'RE A LADY!!
BA
M

READ THIS WAY
...
...
...
...
FWHMP
COME ON OUTSIDE WITH ME... BRAT.
...LADY TSUNADE!
YOU GOT GUTS, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT... TO SAY IT TO MY FACE...
...
GRR...!!


屋代万
引っ越し

WHAT ?!!

I DON'T NEED MY FULL STRENGTH AGAINST A GENIN.
DESPITE HOW I MIGHT LOOK, I WAS ONCE COUNTED AMONG THE PRODIGAL THREE.


SIGH...
...

...
SWSH
KLIK
KRNCH

THIS ONE FINGER'LL BE ENOUGH.
JAB

SWISH

WHOOSH

GIVE ME A BREAK !!

KLAP

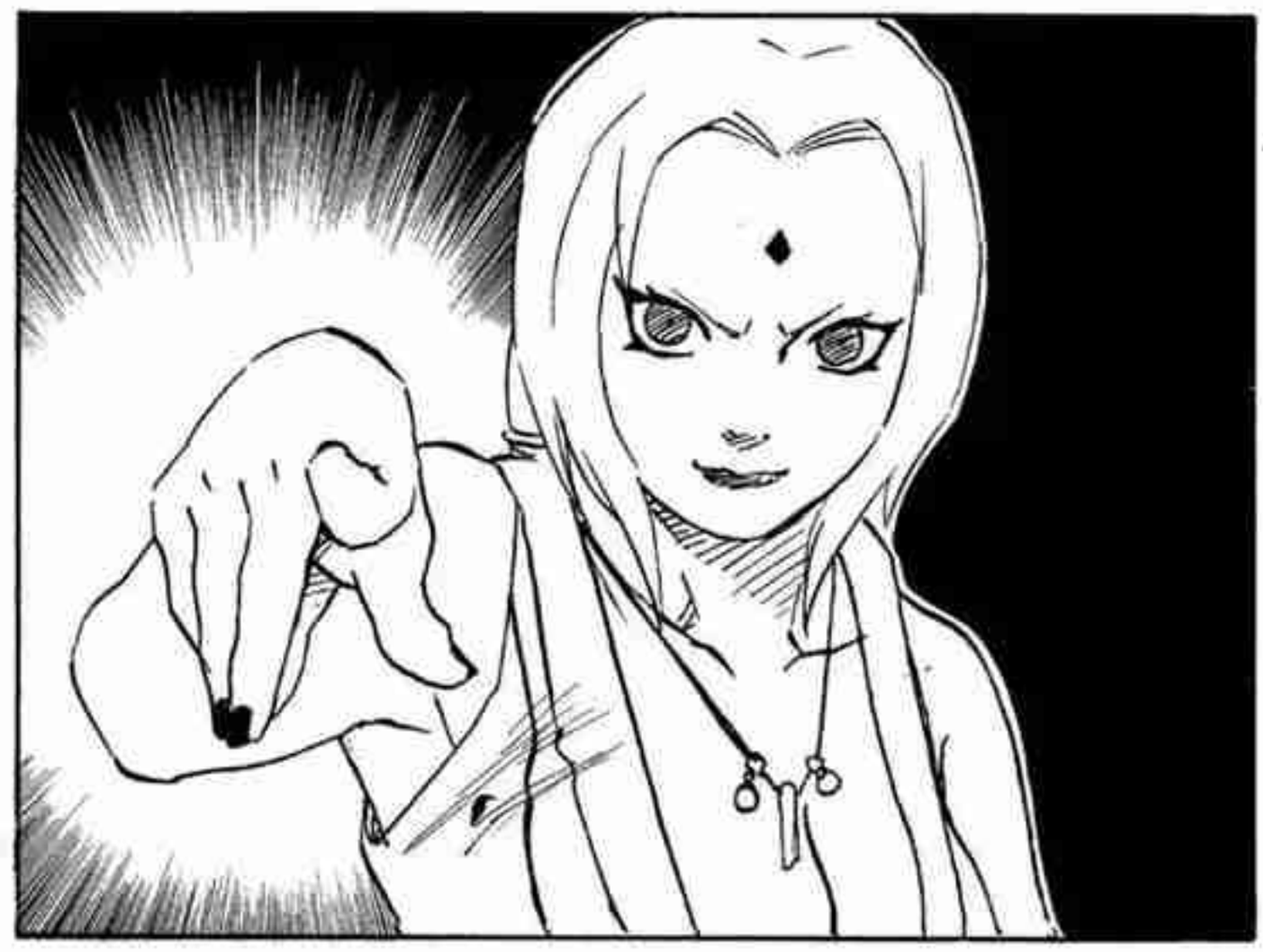
PUNK

SLASH

AGH
ARGH!
WH
AP
NRR
!
GAH!

LADY TSU-NADE ...

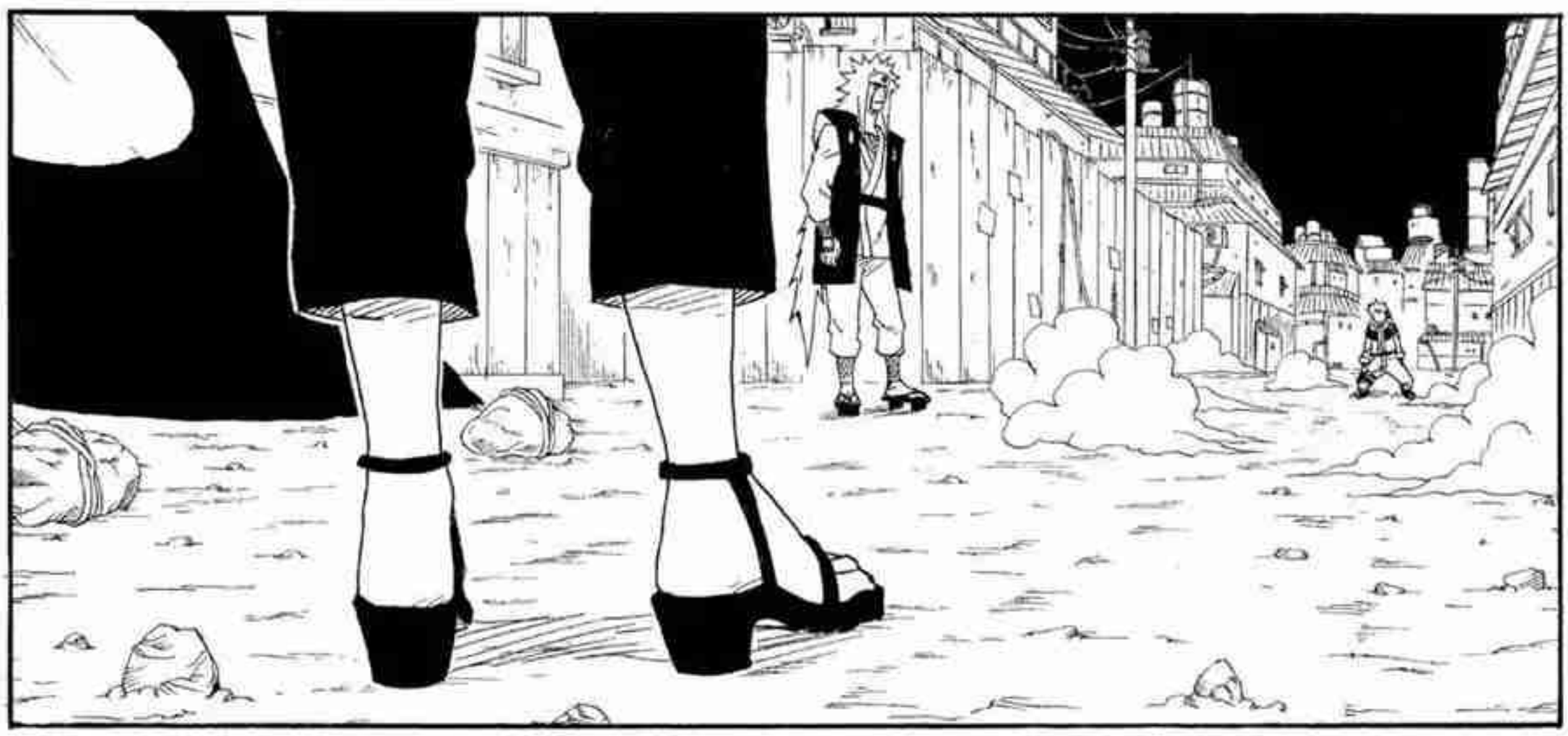
WOOOOSH



WHY...
...ARE YOU SO SENSITIVE ABOUT THE TITLE HOKAGE?

...!

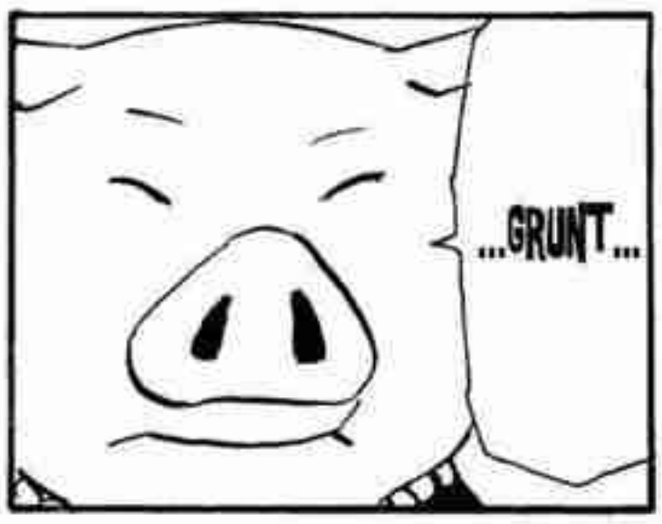
I'VE JUST GOT ONE QUESTION FOR YOU BEFORE YOU PASS OUT.
...HEY ...KID!



...
FLCK

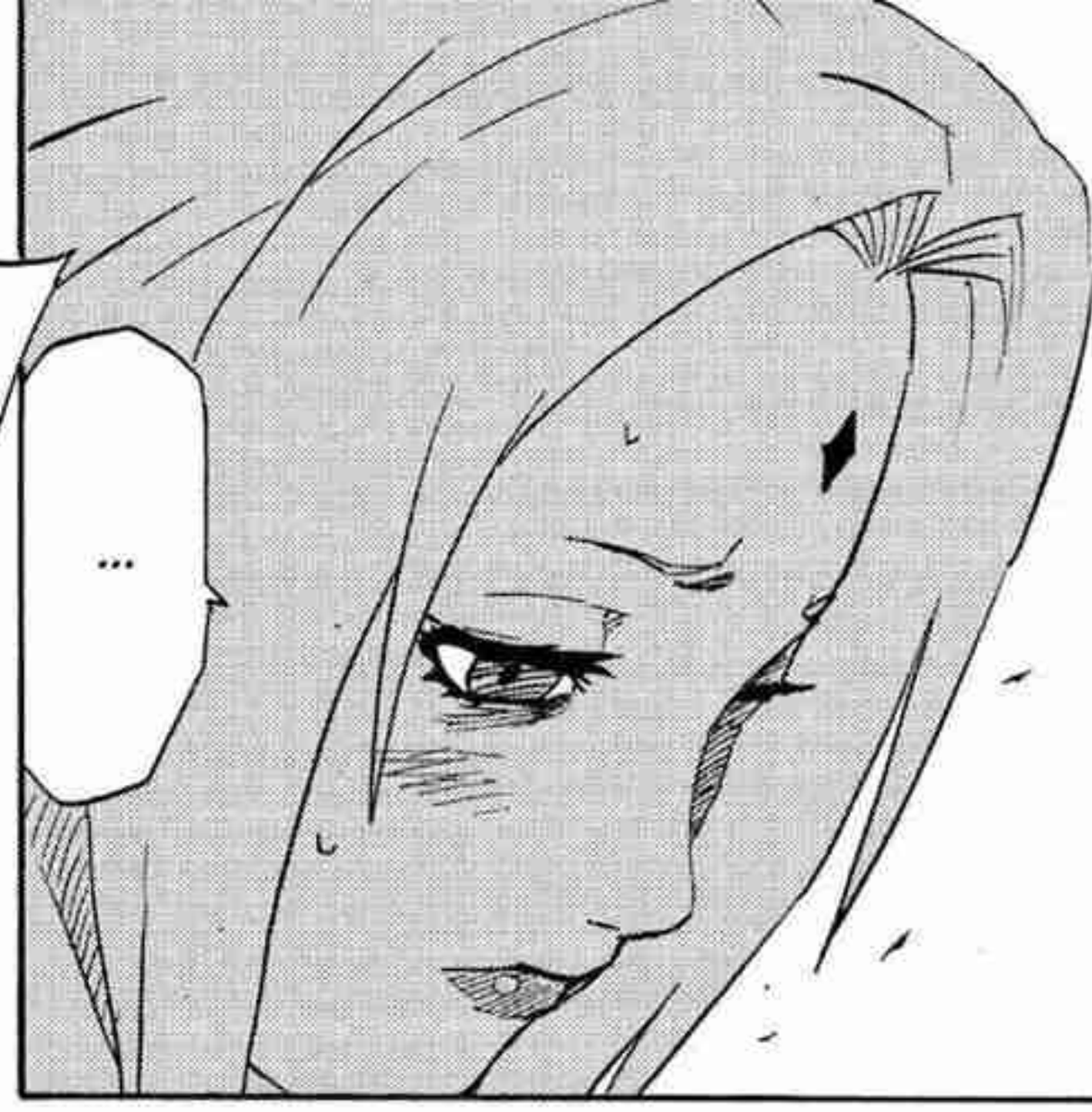
I WANT THAT TITLE SOMEDAY...!
...'CUZ UNLIKE YOU...
HUF
HUF

TO BE HOKAGE IS MY DREAM!



...!
I CAN...
I SHOULD USE THAT JUTSU...!
KURL

WHAT THE?!
...! COULD...!
?!


...

FOCUS...!
MMM

WHOOSH

READ THIS WAY
...
GUK GUK GUK
HUNH?
!
HAAH !!
TAKE THIS !!
!!
WHA...THIS JUTSU'S...!!

THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
MY PERSONAL HISTORY, PART 28

RECENTLY, ALL SORTS OF THINGS ARE BECOMING DIGITIZED. THE *NARUTO* COMICS ARE APPARENTLY THE FIRST COMIC BOOK SERIES THAT IS EDITED DIGITALLY.

WHEN I WAS A COLLEGE STUDENT, THERE WAS A PARTICULAR MUSIC VIDEO THAT I REALLY GOT HOOKED ON. IT WAS KEN ISHII'S MUSIC VIDEO, EXTRA. IT CONTAINS THE WORK OF ONE OF MY FAVORITE ANIMATORS, MR. KOJI MORIMOTO. THE VIDEO WAS SHOWN OVER AND OVER ON MTV, AND GOT BIG ENOUGH THAT IT EVEN BECAME A CONVERSATION TOPIC AMONG MY COLLEGE FRIENDS. PRETTY AWESOME, THEY'D SAY!

I HAD SOMEHOW HEARD THAT IT WAS AN ANIME VIDEO PRODUCED BY A JAPANESE ANIMATOR, BUT UNTIL I ACTUALLY WATCHED IT, IT DIDN'T QUITE HIT ME. BUT THEN, I WAS STRUCK WHEN I DID! I GOT SUCKED INTO IT SO MUCH THAT I PLAYED HOOKY FROM SCHOOL AND SAT AT HOME WATCHING IT ALL DAY. THE REASON WHY I GOT SO HOOKED WAS BECAUSE I HAD NEVER SEEN SUCH MIND-BLOWING IMAGES BEFORE! TO USE A MORE CURRENT REFERENCE, IT WAS AN IMPACT LIKE THE SLO-MO FLYING BULLET SEQUENCE IN *THE MATRIX*.

FIRST, EVEN THOUGH THE SUBJECT CHARACTERS AND PERSPECTIVE KEEP RAPIDLY CHANGING, THE BACKGROUND SHIFTS ACCORDINGLY AND IN SYNC. AND THE NARROW SENSE OF SPACE AND DEPTH WAS SO REALISTIC. AT FIRST I WONDERED, HOW DID HE DO THIS? BUT BECAUSE I KNEW HE COULDN'T HAVE DRAWN THE BACKGROUNDS BY HAND, I REALIZED THAT HE MUST HAVE DIGITALLY RENDERED IT USING A COMPUTER OR SOMETHING AND THEN ADDED THE BACKGROUNDS AS TEXTURE LAYERS...I HEARD THEY DID THAT WITH GAMES LIKE *VIRTUA FIGHTER 2*, TOO...SUCH WERE THE GEEKY CONVERSATIONS I WAS HAVING.

NOW THAT ANIME HAS ENTERED THE DIGITAL AGE AS WELL, SUCH MOVING BACKGROUNDS ARE NO LONGER NOVELTIES. IN FACT, THERE ARE WORKS NOW WHERE EVEN THE CHARACTERS ARE RENDERED FROM POLYGONS AND ONE NO LONGER HAS TO DRAW EACH CELL INDIVIDUALLY. JUST...WHEN ONE USES THE COMPUTER, THE LINES ARE TOO CLEAN... IT KIND OF LOSES A LITTLE OF THE ENERGY... OR EMOTIONAL IMPACT, SOMETHING LIKE THAT... I FEEL LIKE SOME OF THE NICE PARTS OF HAND DRAWING HAVE DISAPPEARED (ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF THE CHARACTERS).

I WISH THIS FEEL-GOOD STUFF COULD BE EXPRESSED BY THE COMPUTER AS WELL; THAT WOULD MAKE THINGS PERFECT... IT SEEMS LIKE MANGA ARE ALSO GETTING MORE AND MORE DIGITIZED, BUT I WONDER IF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY STILL COSTS TOO MUCH TIME AND MONEY...?

Number 159: The Wager...!!

TH... THIS JUTSU, IT'S?!
SHIN

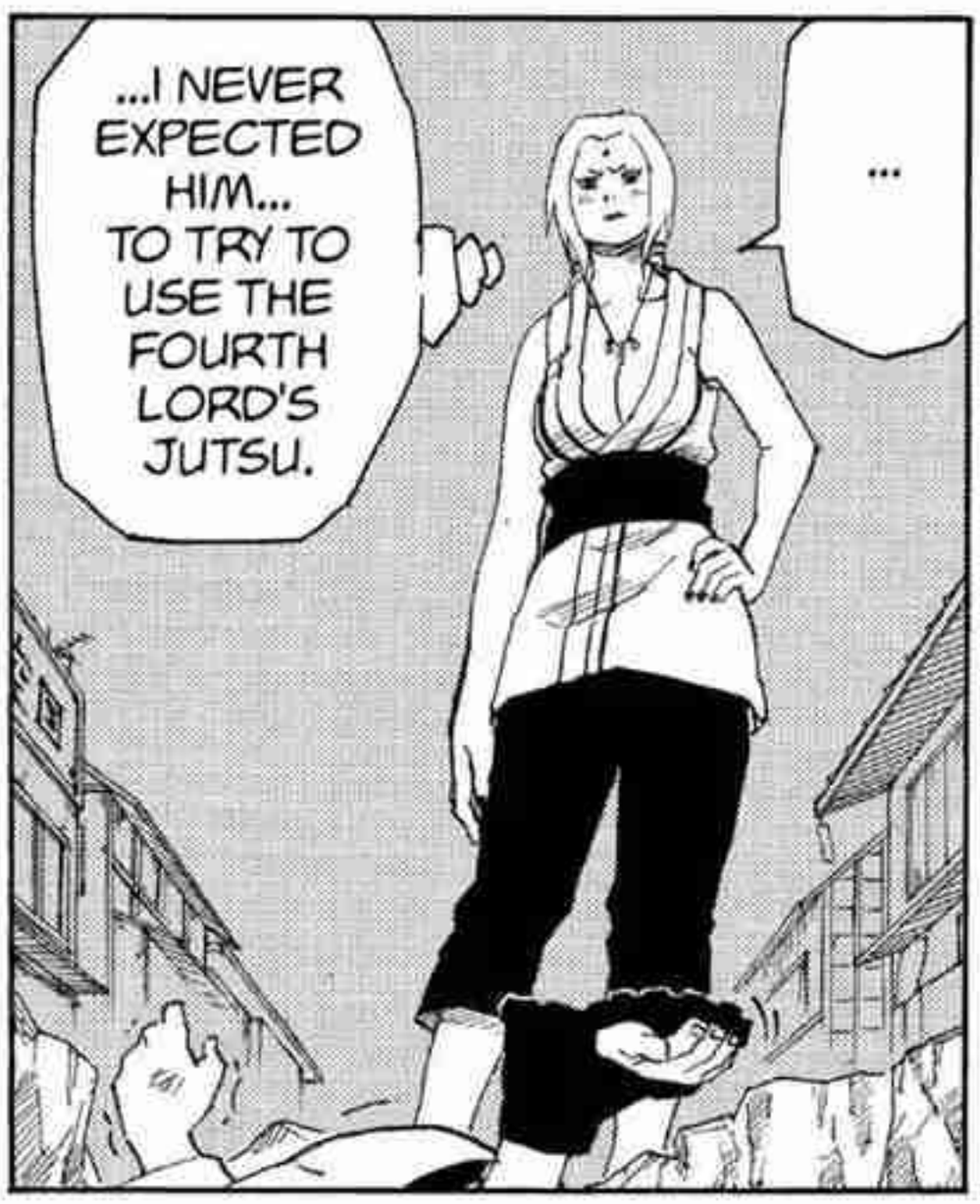
WO
FWHOO
ROOOOAR !!

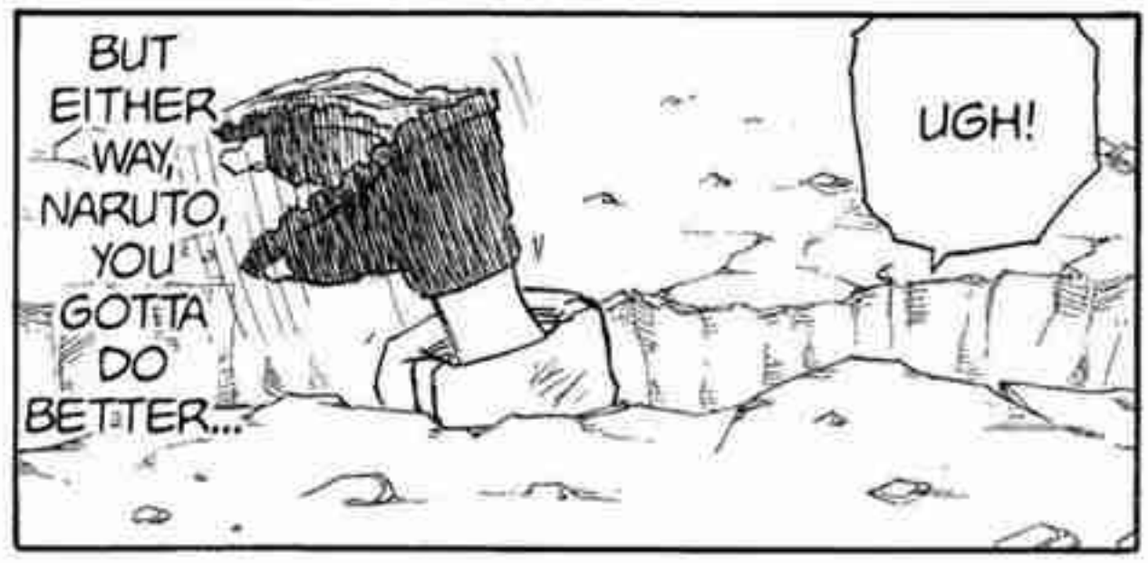
KLNK
!
WAAH!
FWHMP
!!
GAKK

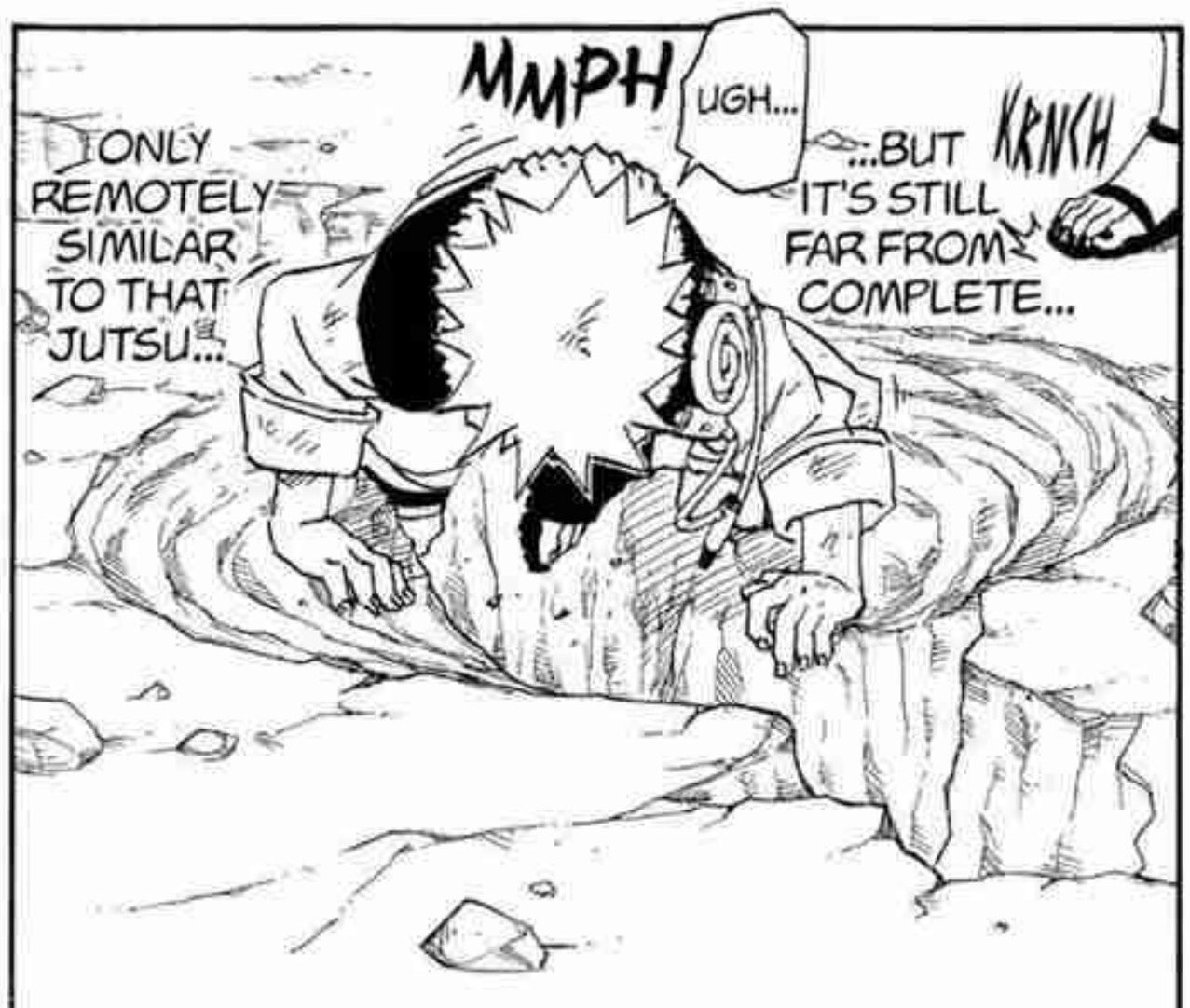
THUDDD

THUMP

ARGH!!







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HUMPH... THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN MANAGE THAT JUTSU ARE YOU AND THE FOURTH LORD.
I AM HIS MENTOR, YOU KNOW... FOR THE PRESENT...

WHO TAUGHT HIM THE RASENGAN?!
JIRAIYA, WAS IT YOU?

RASENGAN...?!
TWITCH

...THAT'S PRETTY CRUEL.
PLAYING MIGHTY MENTOR BY TEACHING HIM JUTSU HE HAS NO HOPE OF MASTERING?

...
...
THAT'S HOW DREAMY-EYED BRATS GET STARTED ON THE WHOLE *I'M GOING TO BECOME HOKAGE* FARCE!

SHUT UP! SHUT UP!!

IT'S NOT A FARCE!!

GIVE ME THREE DAYS, AND I'LL MASTER THIS JUTSU FOR YOU!!

...

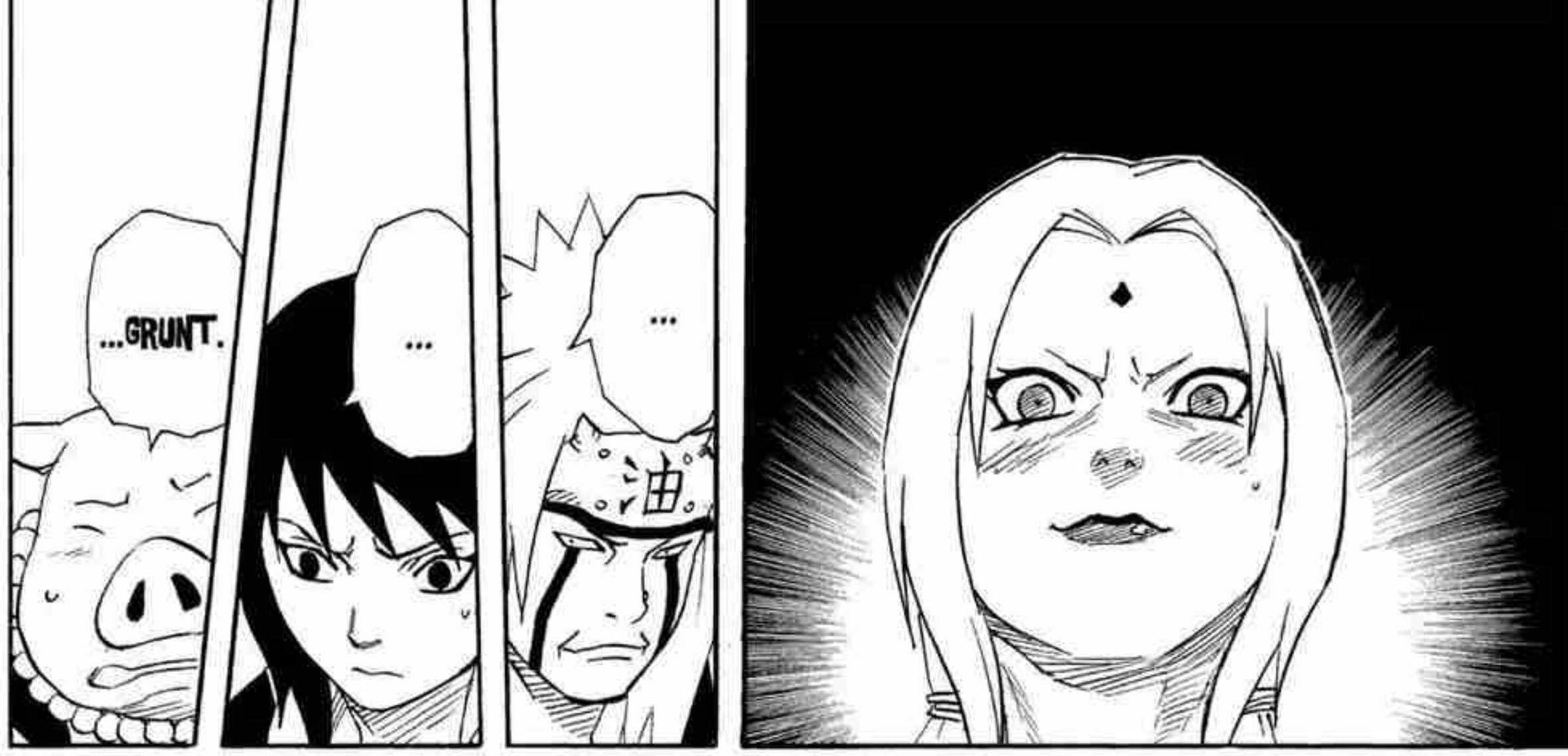
HEH!

BUT A MAN DOESN'T BREAK HIS WORD, YOU KNOW!

FEH... NICE WORDS, BRAT...

...THAT'S MY SHINOBI WAY!

I NEVER GO BACK ON MY WORD...


...GRUNT.
...
...

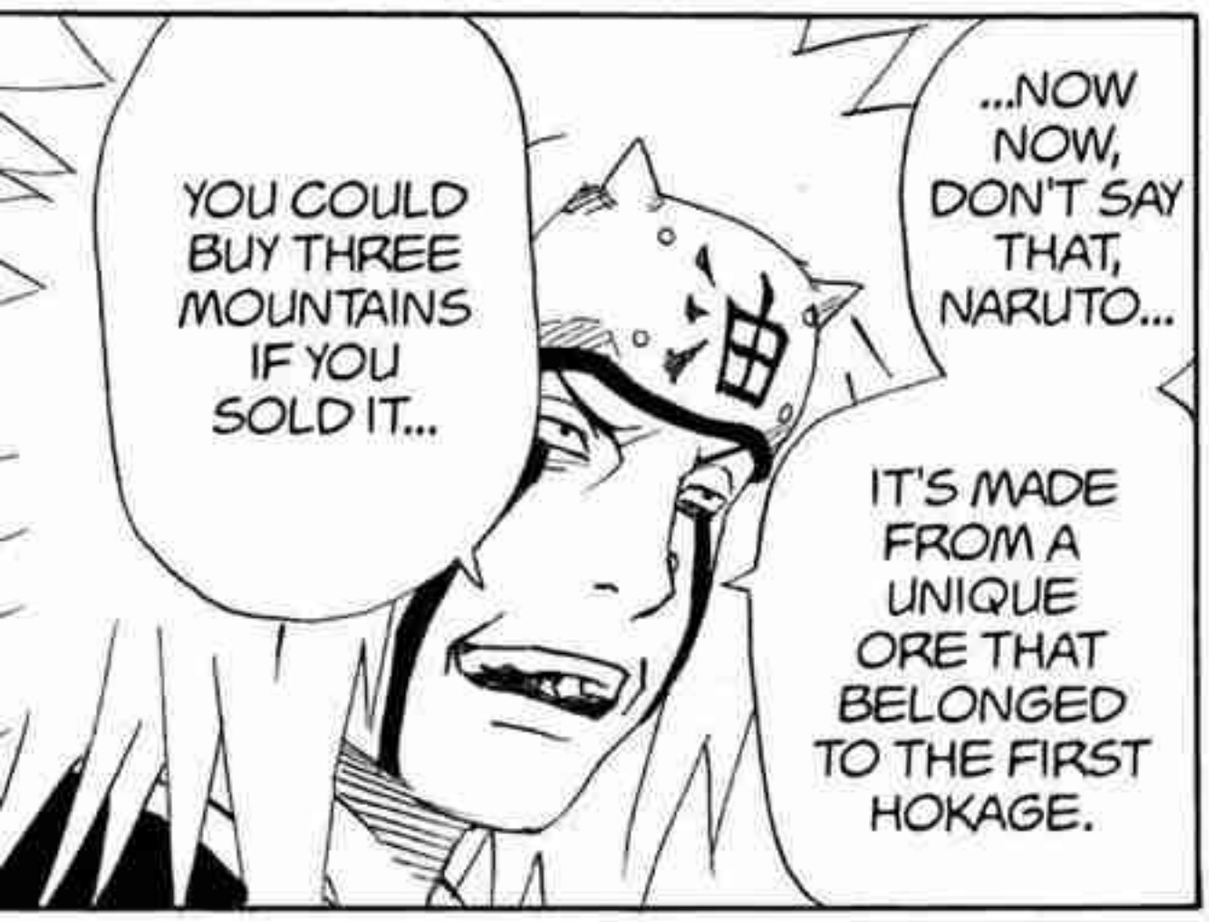
...LET'S MAKE A WAGER.
...THEN...

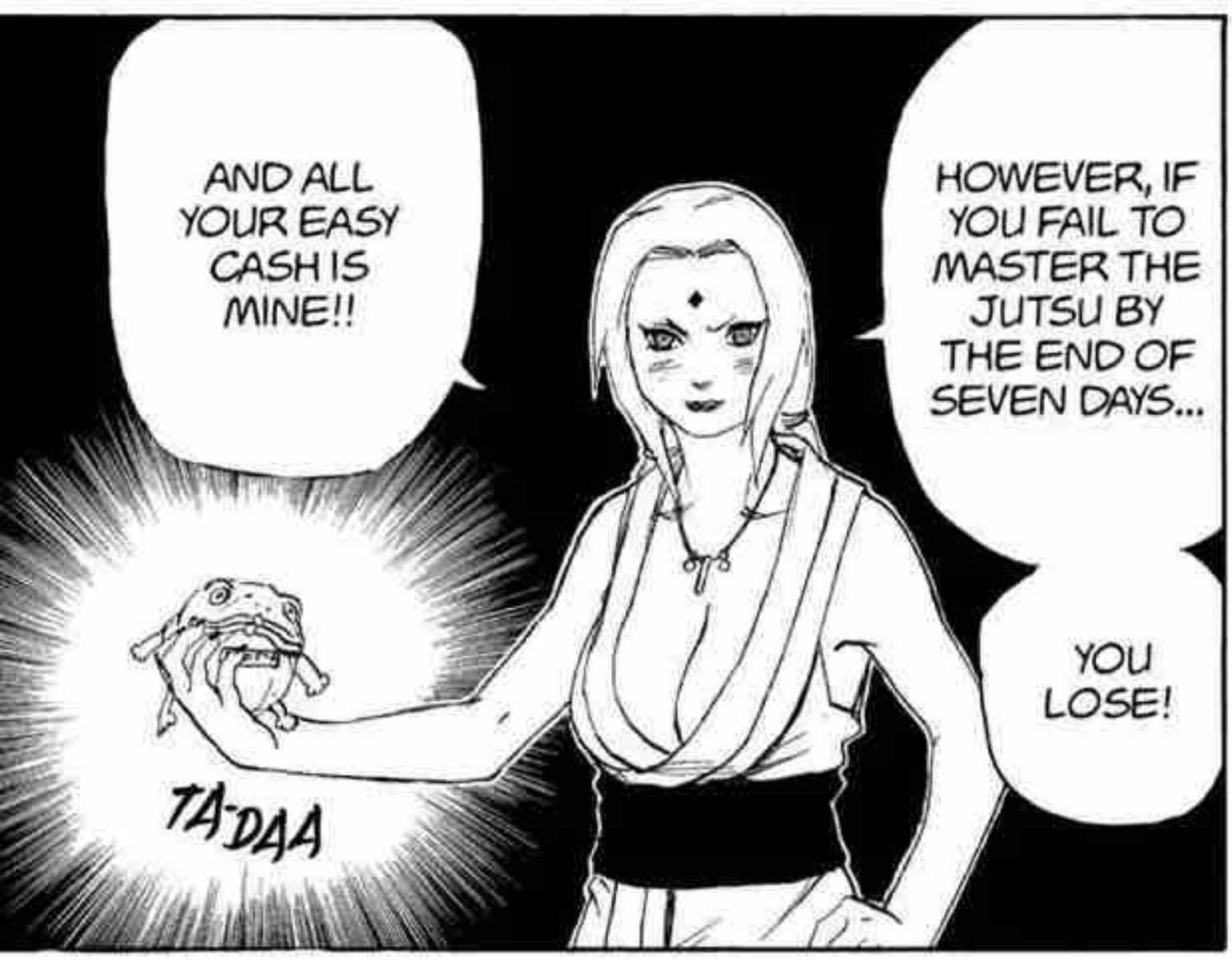
...AND I'LL GIVE YOU THIS NECKLACE.

WAGER...?
IF YOU MANAGE TO MASTER THIS JUTSU IN THAT TIME, I'LL ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU ARE WORTHY OF BECOMING HOKAGE...
...I'LL GIVE YOU A WHOLE WEEK.

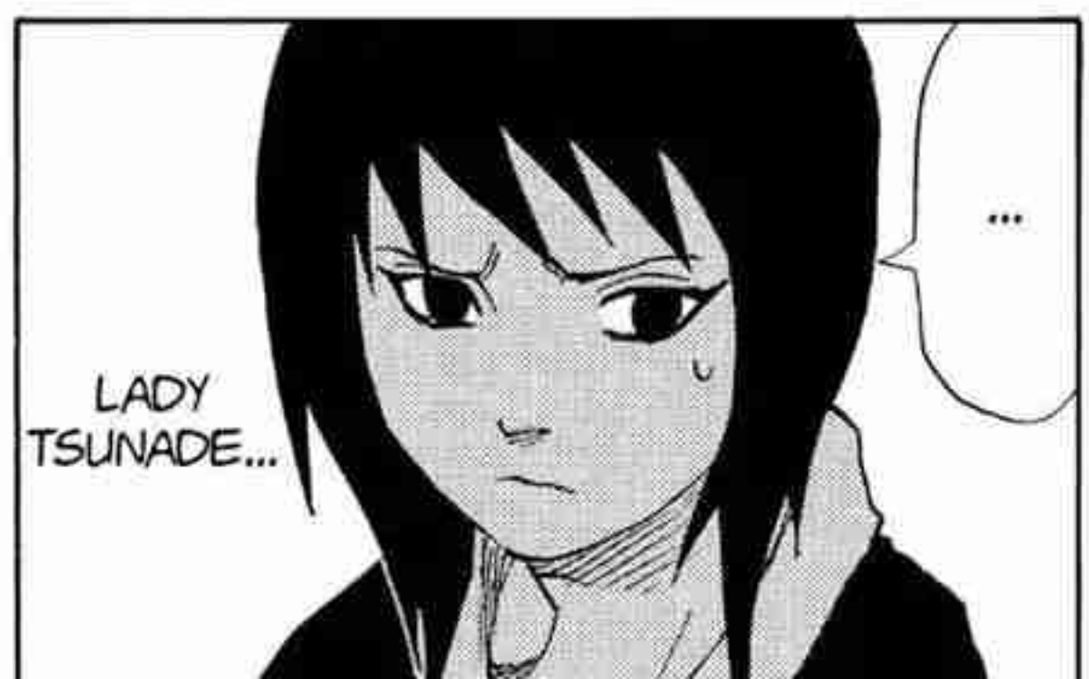
NO THANKS, I DON'T WANT SOME OLD NECKLACE!
!

LADY TSUNADE?! B...BUT THAT'S...!
!


YOU COULD BUY THREE MOUNTAINS IF YOU SOLD IT...
...NOW NOW, DON'T SAY THAT, NARUTO...
IT'S MADE FROM A UNIQUE ORE THAT BELONGED TO THE FIRST HOKAGE.


AND ALL YOUR EASY CASH IS MINE!!
HOWEVER, IF YOU FAIL TO MASTER THE JUTSU BY THE END OF SEVEN DAYS...
YOU LOSE!
TA-DAA

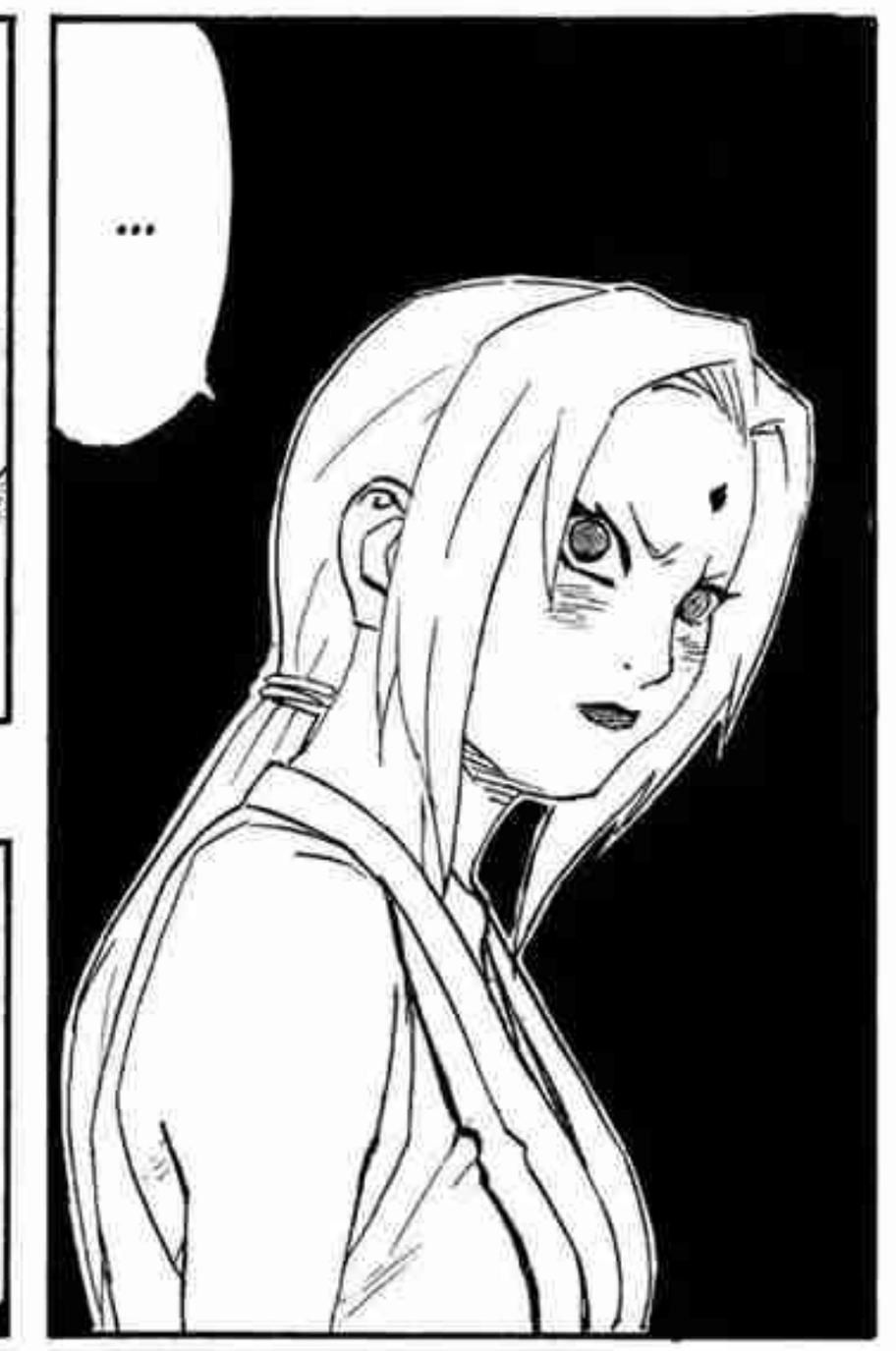
O...OH... OKAY!
WH... WHOA...
...WHAT A MER-CENARY...


LADY TSUNADE...
...

WHEN THE HECK DID SHE ...?!
HEY! MY FROGGIE!

...SHE'S NEVER WAGERED THE NECKLACE BEFORE...

...!
SHIZUNE, COULD YOU TAKE NARUTO WITH YOU AND GO LOOK FOR THE NIGHT'S LODGINGS?
CLOMP CLOMP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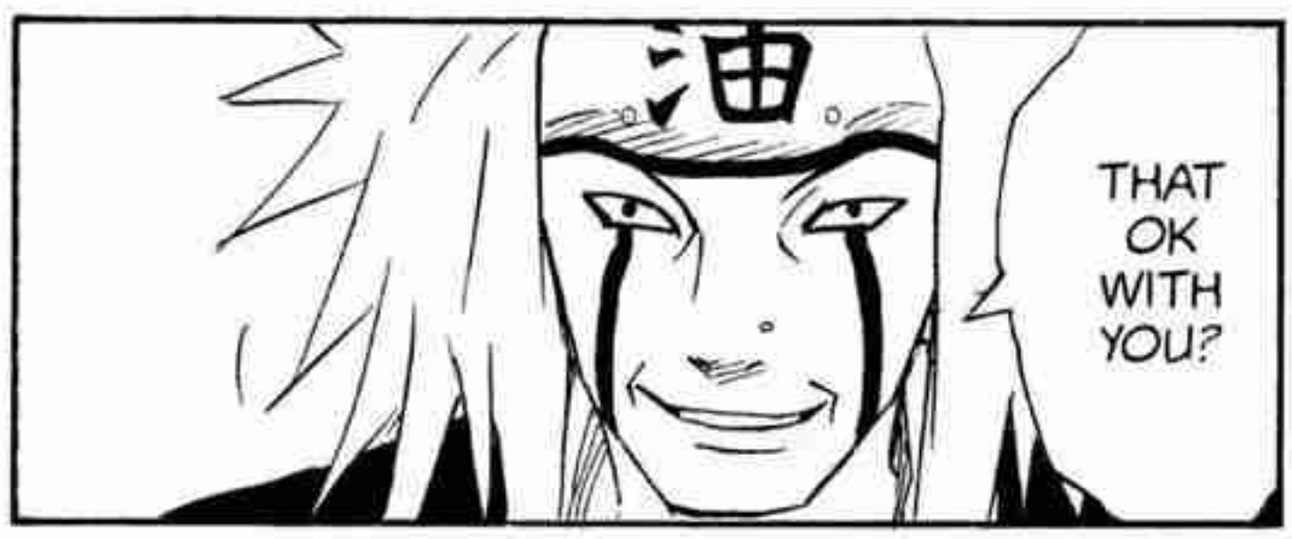
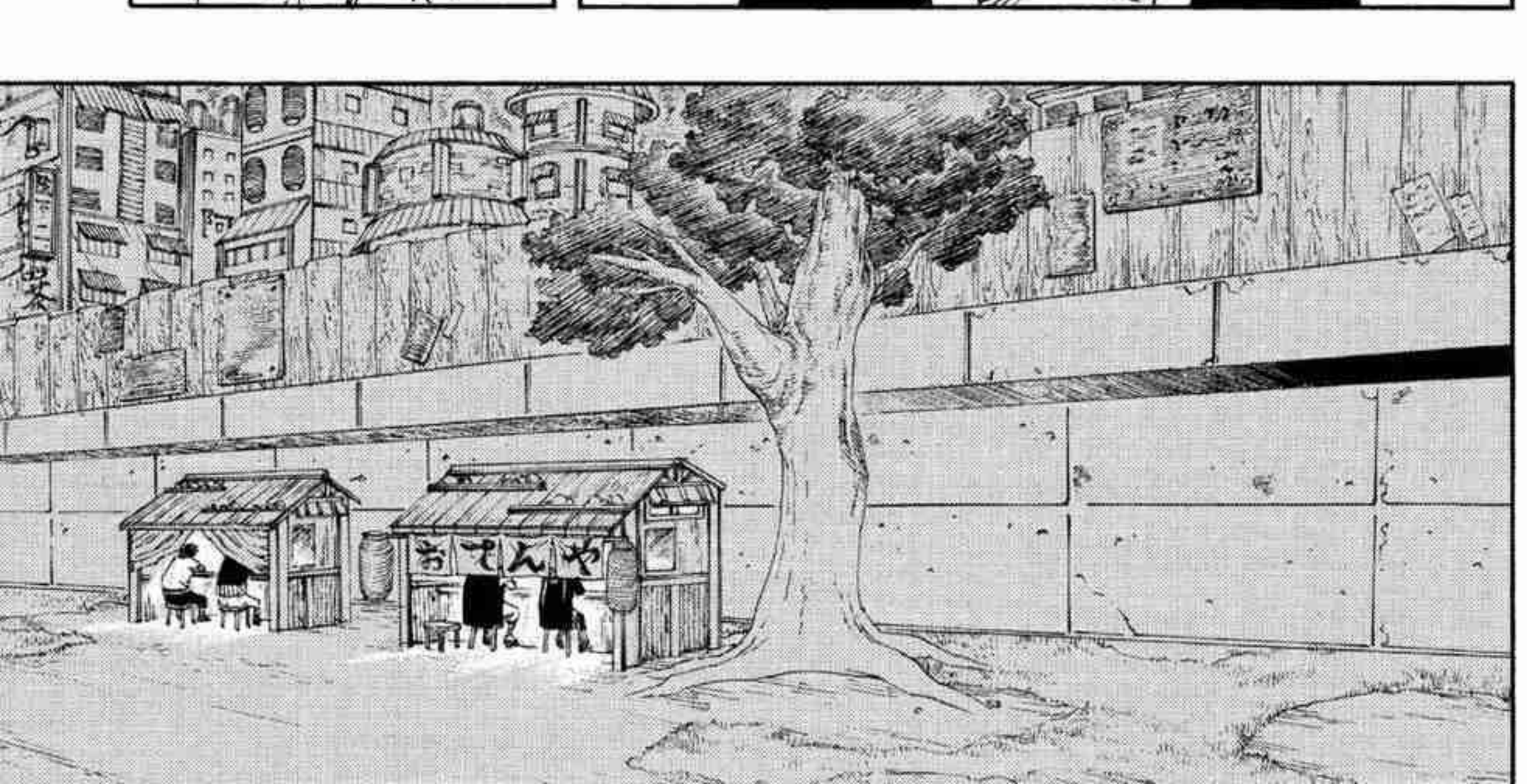

THAT OK WITH YOU?

?

THANK YOU... LORD JIRAIYA...
...
YES, SIR!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THERE YA GO!

KLINK

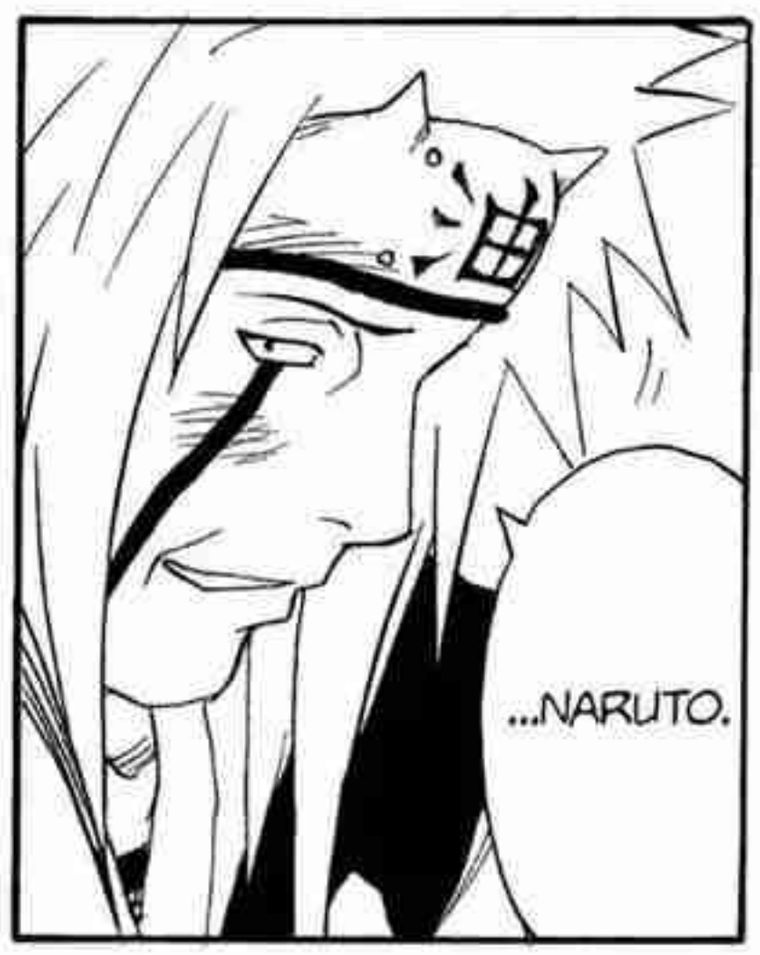
...

HUMPH! I DON'T GOT THE HOTS FOR YOU NEITHER!

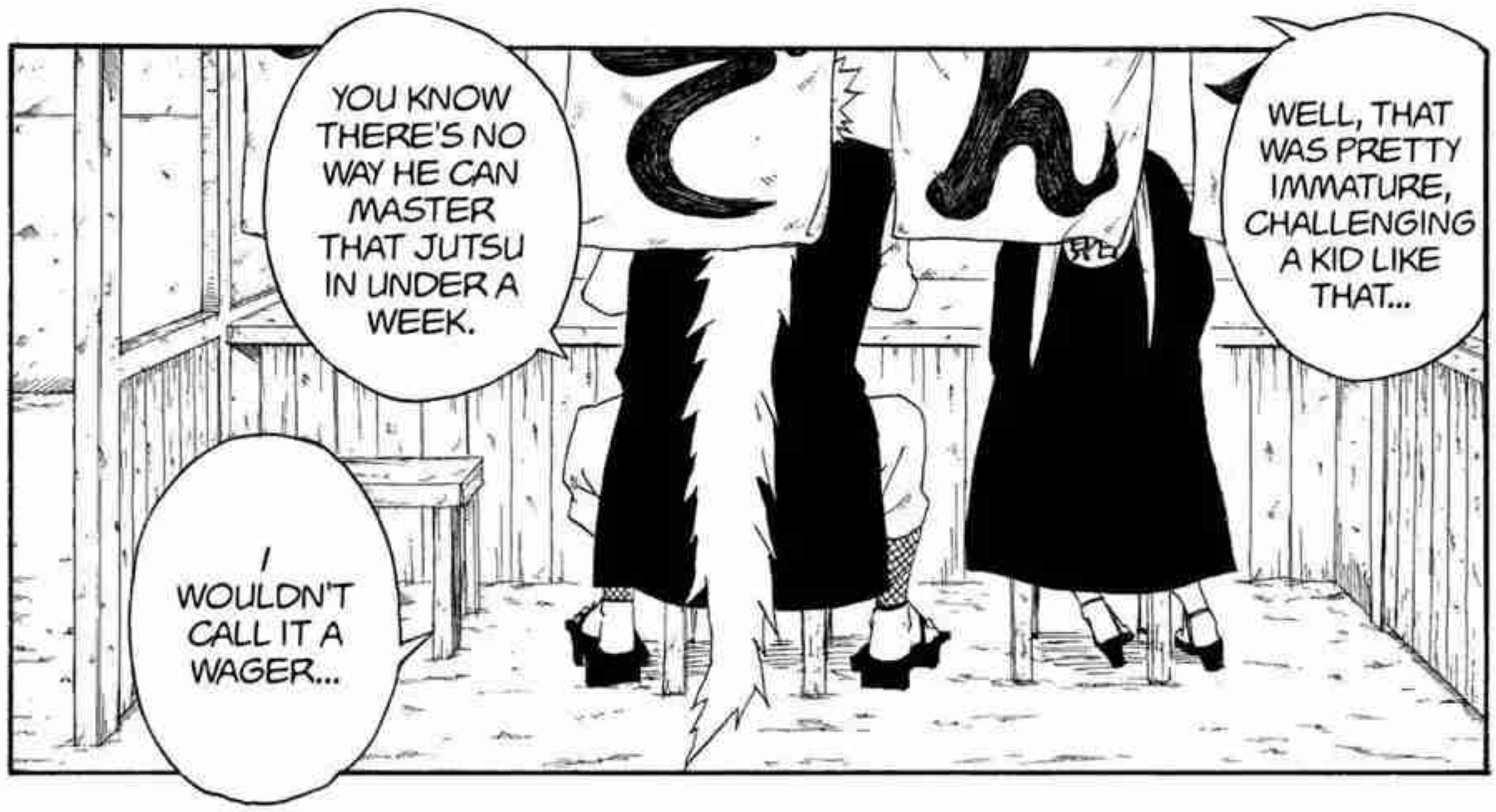
...AND YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL...

LET ME MAKE THIS CLEAR: I STILL HAVE NO INTEREST IN YOU.

WHY SHOULD HE...?
...


...NARUTO.

WHAT?
SO DOES IT BOTHER YOU...?


YOU KNOW THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN MASTER THAT JUTSU IN UNDER A WEEK.
WELL, THAT WAS PRETTY IMMATURE, CHALLENGING A KID LIKE THAT...
I WOULDN'T CALL IT A WAGER...

...

I'M NOT DESPERATE!
賭

WHY SO DES-PERATE...?

TSK...
...

YOU MEETING WITH OROCHI-MARU?

油

I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF OFFER HE MADE YOU, BUT...

I SAW THE LOOK ON SHIZUNE'S FACE.

...!

...

OH, AND...

...I GOTTA TELL YOU ONE THING.

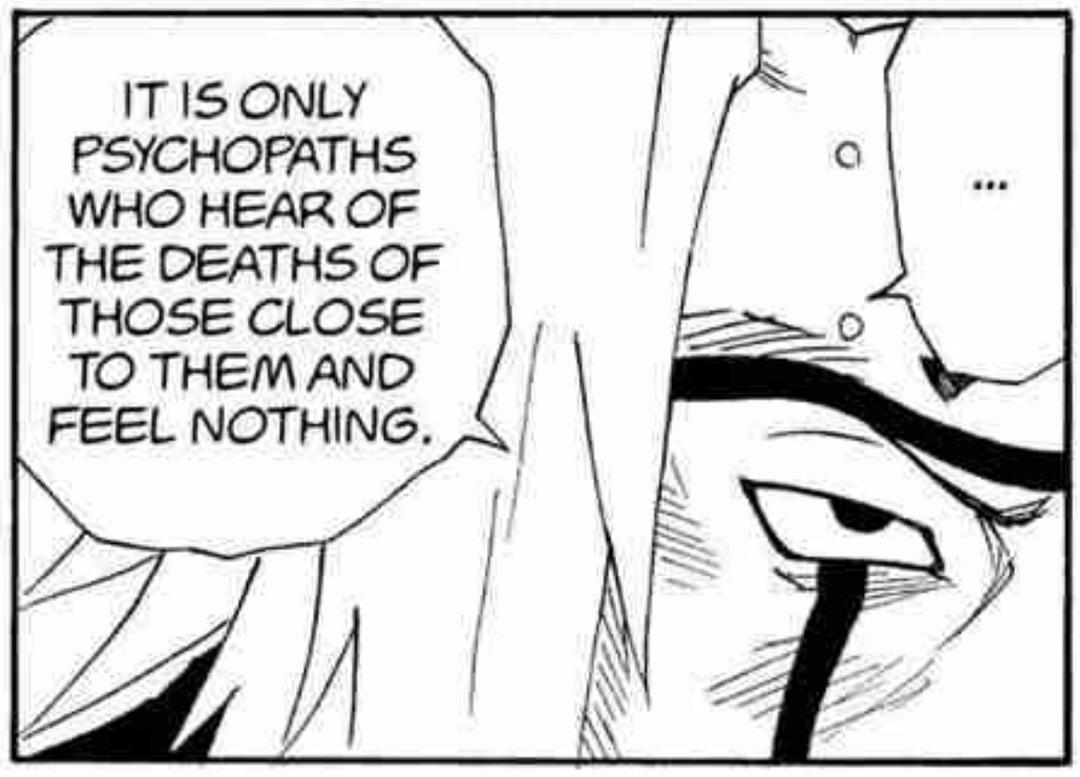
...JUST DON'T RUSH INTO IT.

...THAT WAS THE DREAM THEY FOUGHT FOR!

...THEY WANTED AN END TO TURBULENT DAYS AND TO SEE THE VILLAGE PROSPER. IT WAS THOSE IDEALS...

EVERY ONE OF THE PREVIOUS HOKAGE RISKED THEIR LIVES TO PROTECT THE VILLAGE OF KONOHA AND ALL THOSE WHO LIVE THERE...

...WHY SHOULD I CARE ANYMORE, EH!


IT IS ONLY PSYCHOPATHS WHO HEAR OF THE DEATHS OF THOSE CLOSE TO THEM AND FEEL NOTHING.
...

THAT'S NOT YOU, IS IT?
...

I'LL PERSONALLY HUNT YOU DOWN AND KILL YOU!

...

...

THAT'S ENOUGH!
EVEN THAT DAY...
YOU USED TO BE THE FIRST TO CARE ABOUT THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF FELLOW VILLAGERS...

READ
THIS
WAY

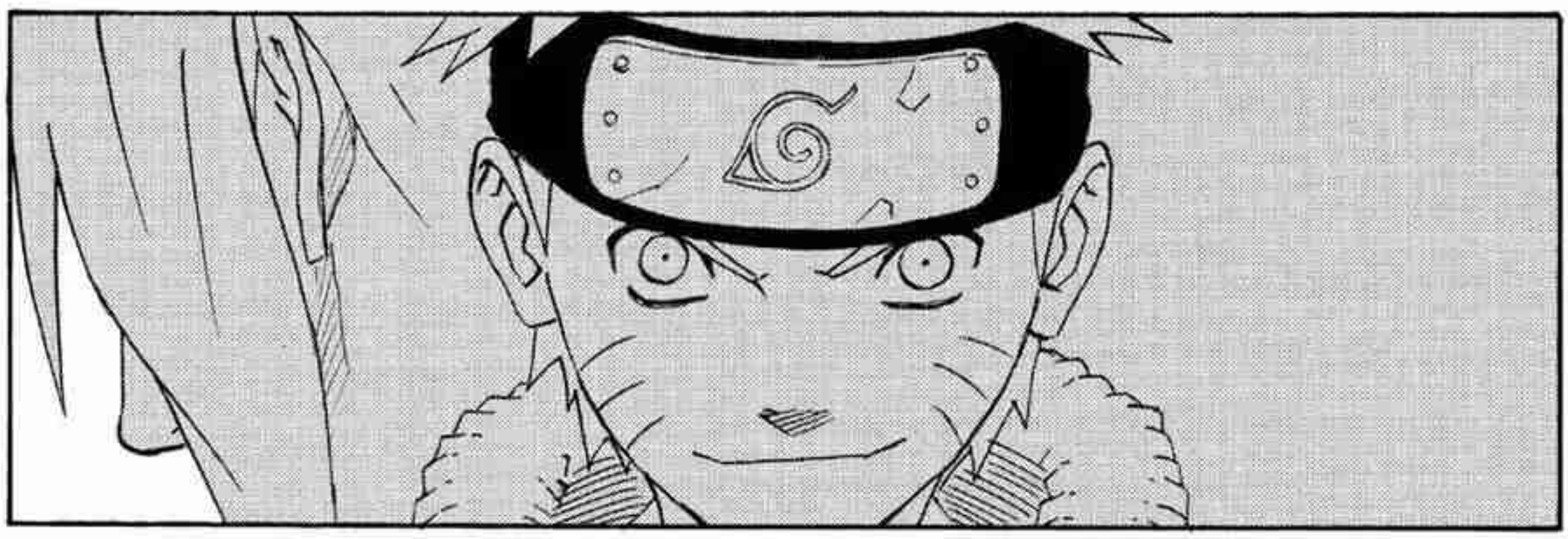
...

...IS MY DREAM!
TO BE HOKAGE...

WHY... DID YOU BRING ALONG THAT BRAT.
...

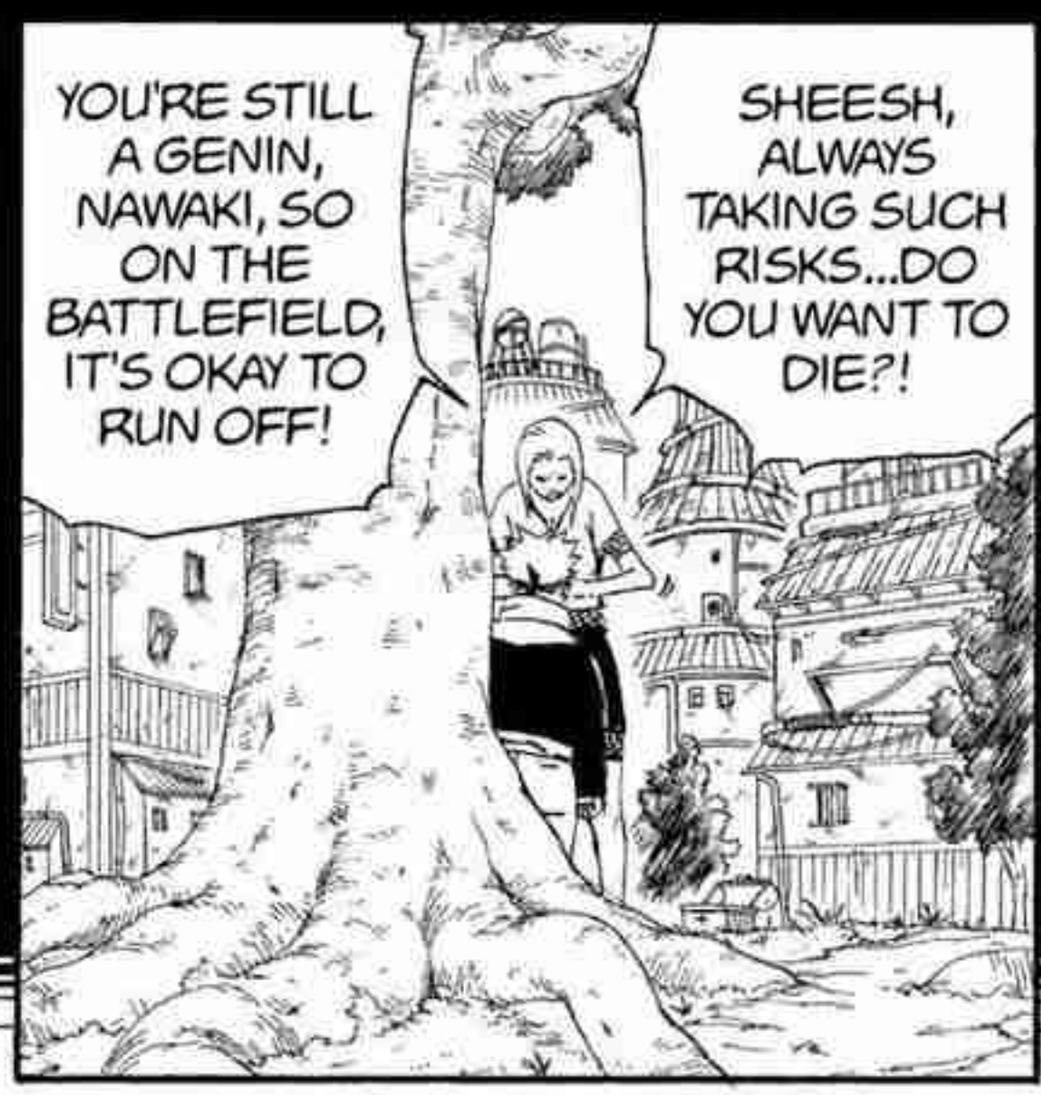
...

UNCANNY, ISN'T IT? ...HE'S EVEN ABOUT THE SAME AGE...
...



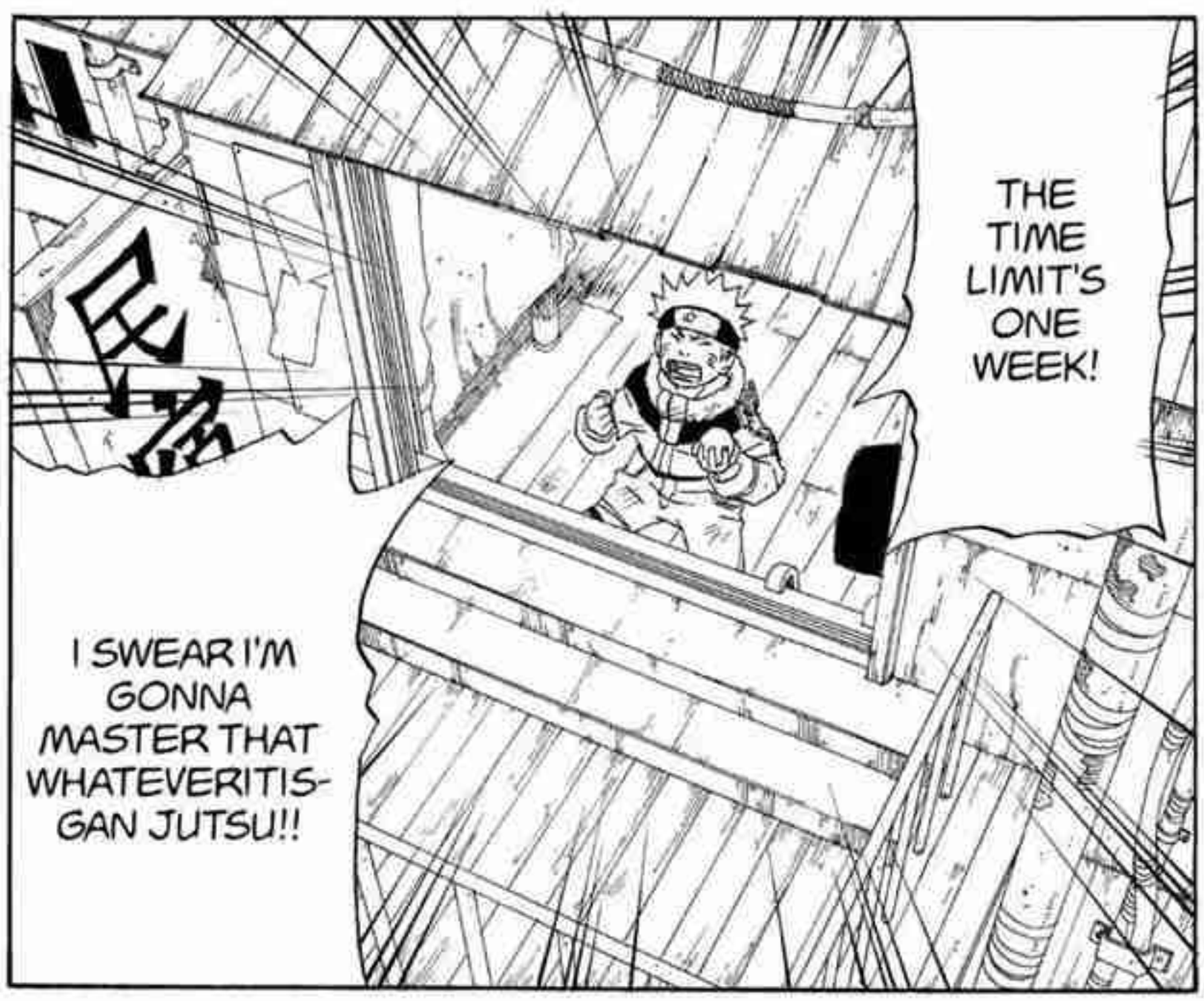
...IS MY DREAM!

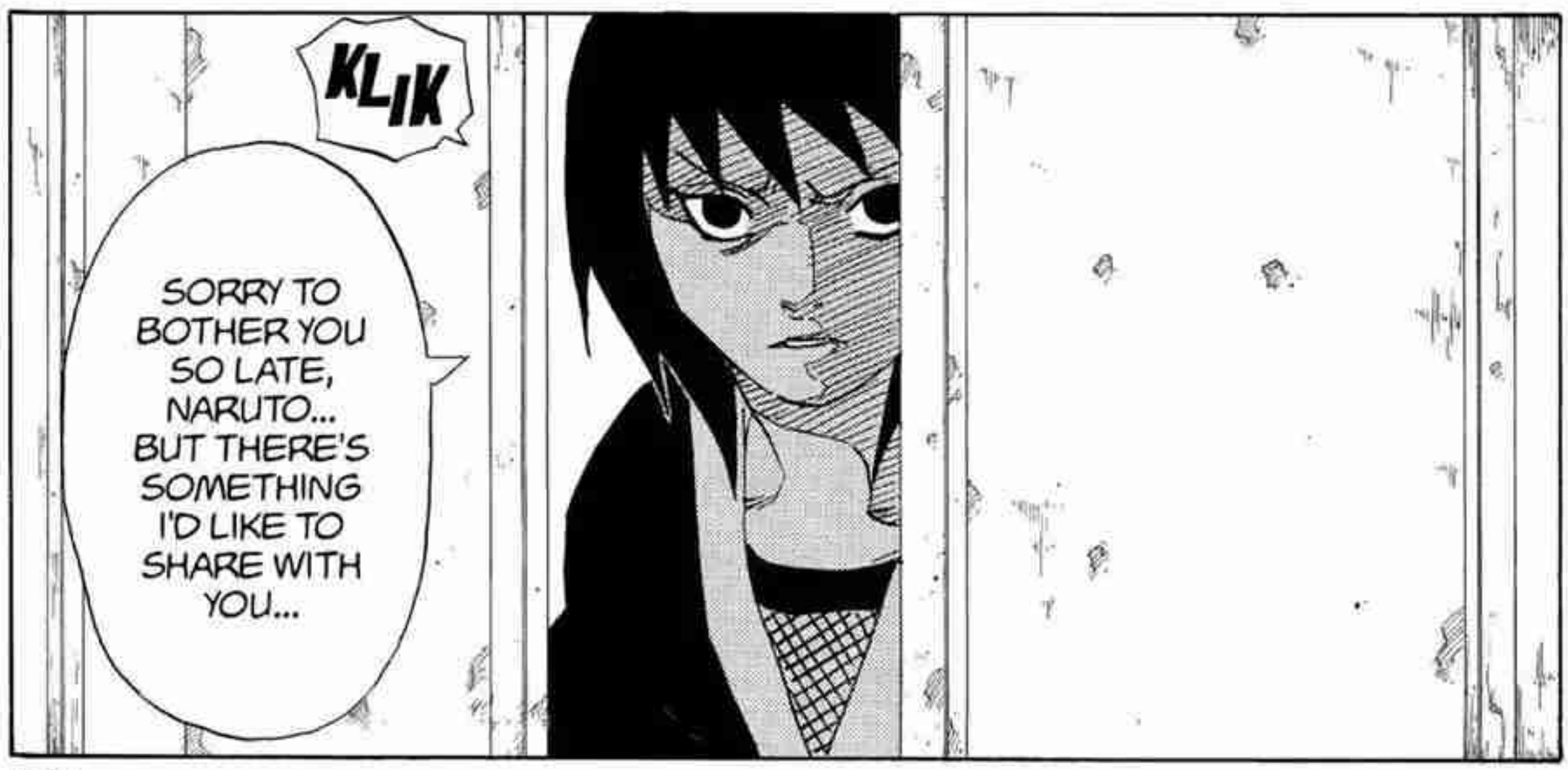
TO BE HOKAGE...



C

KNOK
KNOK


THE TIME LIMIT'S ONE WEEK!
I SWEAR I'M GONNA MASTER THAT WHATEVERITIS-GAN JUTSU!!


KLIK
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU SO LATE, NARUTO... BUT THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU...

Number 160:

The Necklace of Death...!!

I NEED TO REST UP TONIGHT SO I CAN TRAIN EARLY!

IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT... WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT ?!

...AND I WANTED TO EXPLAIN ABOUT THE NECKLACE, TOO...

...BUT I DON'T WANT YOU TO MISUNDER-STAND LADY TSUNADE...

I'M SORRY...

...

HUMPH! WHAT DO I CARE ABOUT THAT OLD LADY?!

民宿

PLEASE DON'T SAY SUCH THINGS WITHOUT KNOWING ANYTHING!

LADY TSUNADE ISN'T THE KIND OF PERSON YOU THINK SHE IS!

I'M SORRY... I DIDN'T MEAN TO RAISE MY VOICE AT YOU...

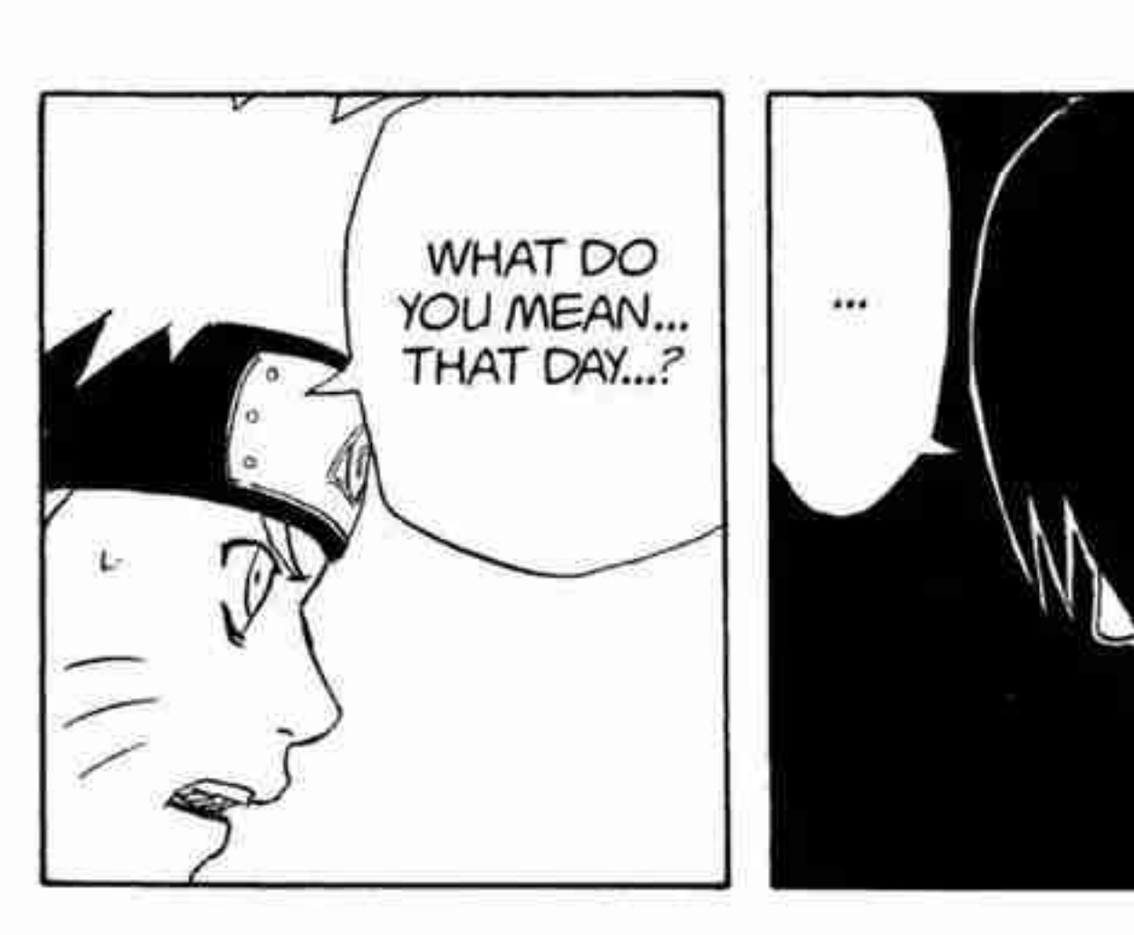
...

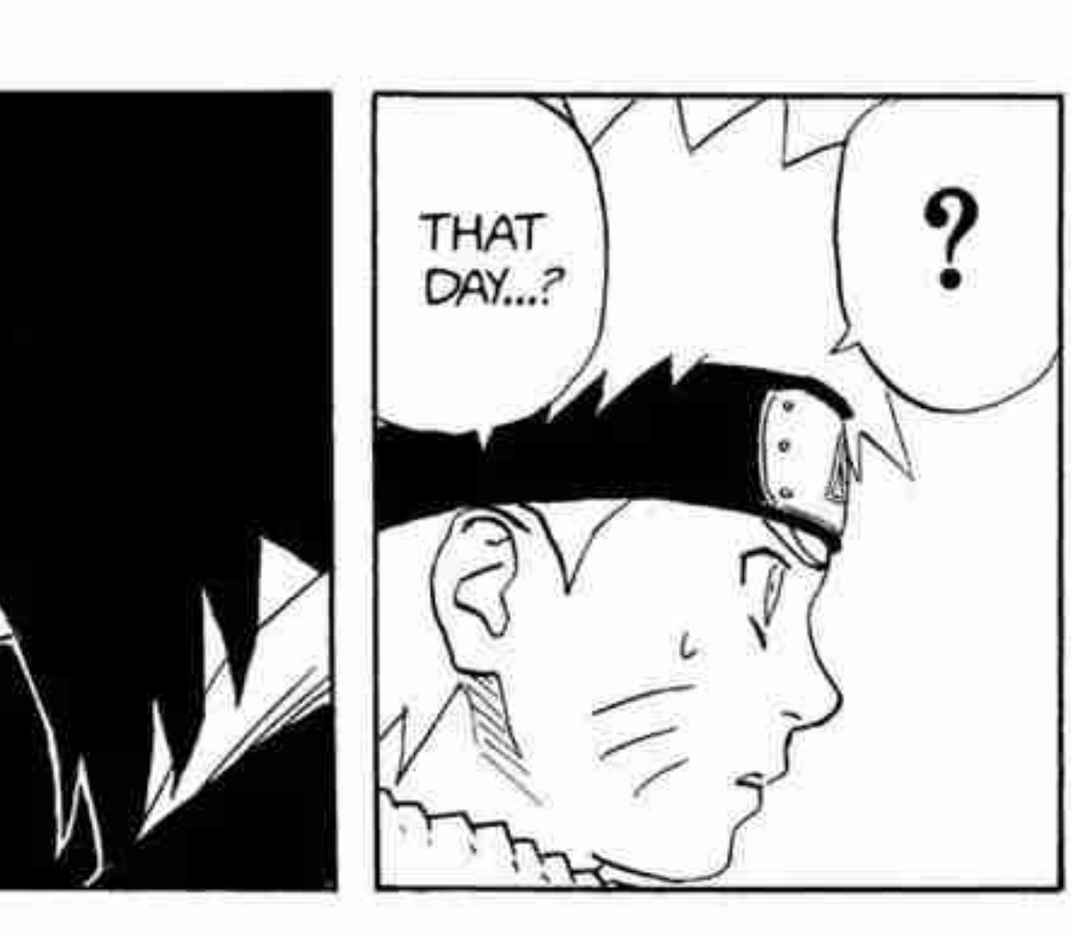
READ
THIS
WAY

...

SHE WAS KIND AND COMPASSION-ATE...SHE REALLY LOVED THE VILLAGE...
SHE WASN'T LIKE THAT AT ALL, LONG AGO...
BUT THEN... SHE CHANGED...

...ALL BECAUSE OF THAT DAY.

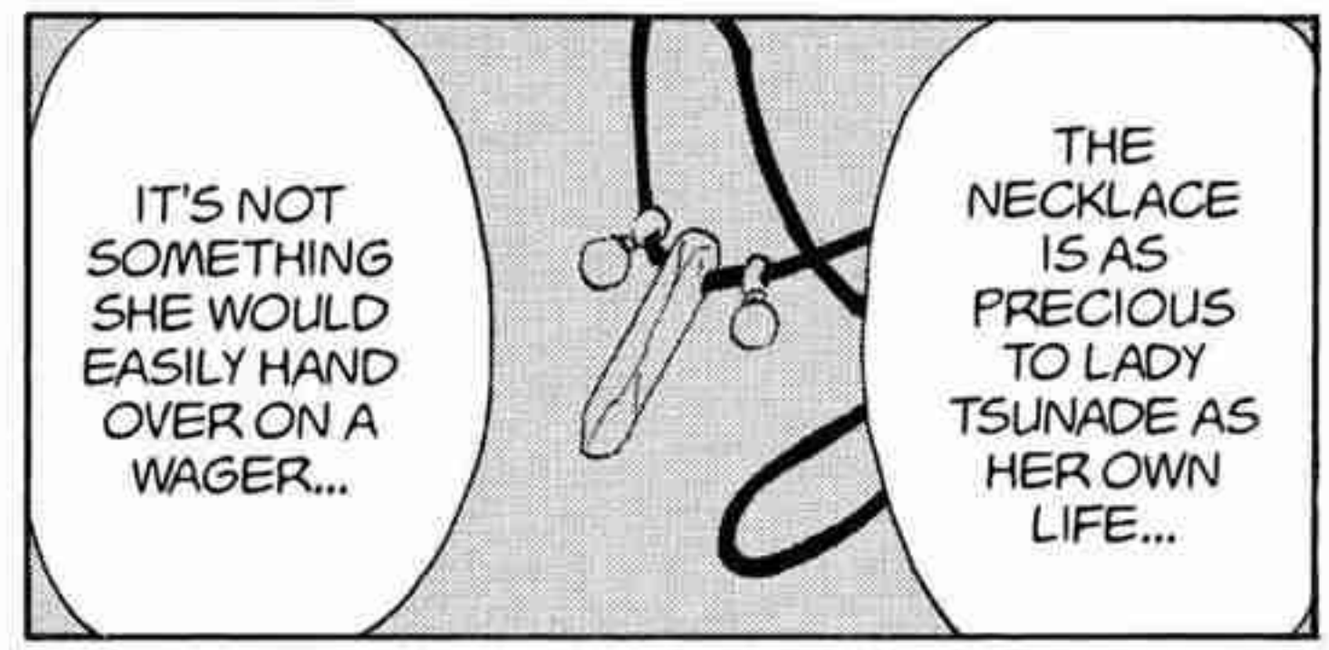

WHAT DO YOU MEAN... THAT DAY...?


...
THAT DAY...?
?

...HER DREAMS, HER LOVE, EVEN HOPE ITSELF!
THE DAY SHE LOST EVERY-THING...

...WAS THE NECKLACE, LOADED WITH MEMORIES...
...ALL THAT REMAINED AFTER-WARDS...

...?!


IT'S NOT SOMETHING SHE WOULD EASILY HAND OVER ON A WAGER...
THE NECKLACE IS AS PRECIOUS TO LADY TSUNADE AS HER OWN LIFE...

SHE'S THE ONE WHO PUT IT ON THE TABLE!
HOW WOULD I KNOW THAT?!

?

IT'S NO ORDINARY NECK-LACE...
AND...THE NECKLACE IS NOT MEANT FOR YOU!

...IF ANYONE ELSE TRIES TO WEAR IT, THEY ALL EVENTUALLY...
IT ONLY ACKNOWLEDGES LADY TSUNADE...

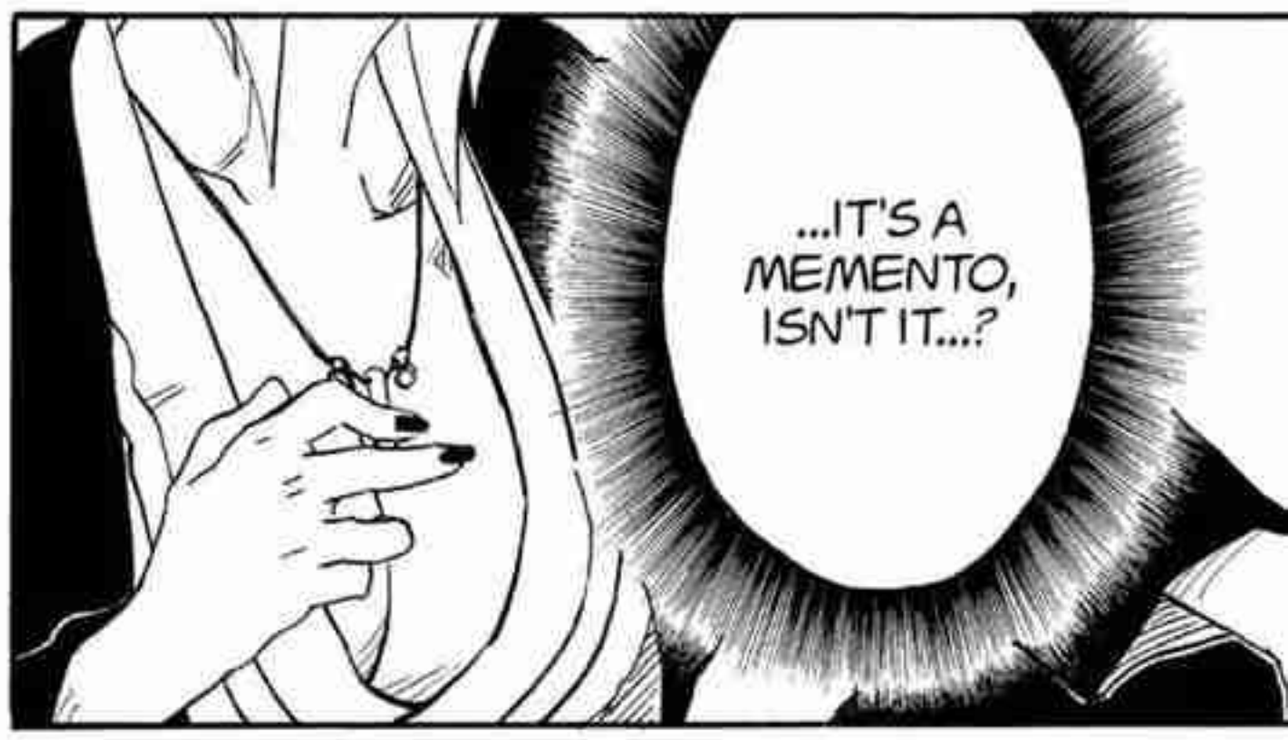
...?!

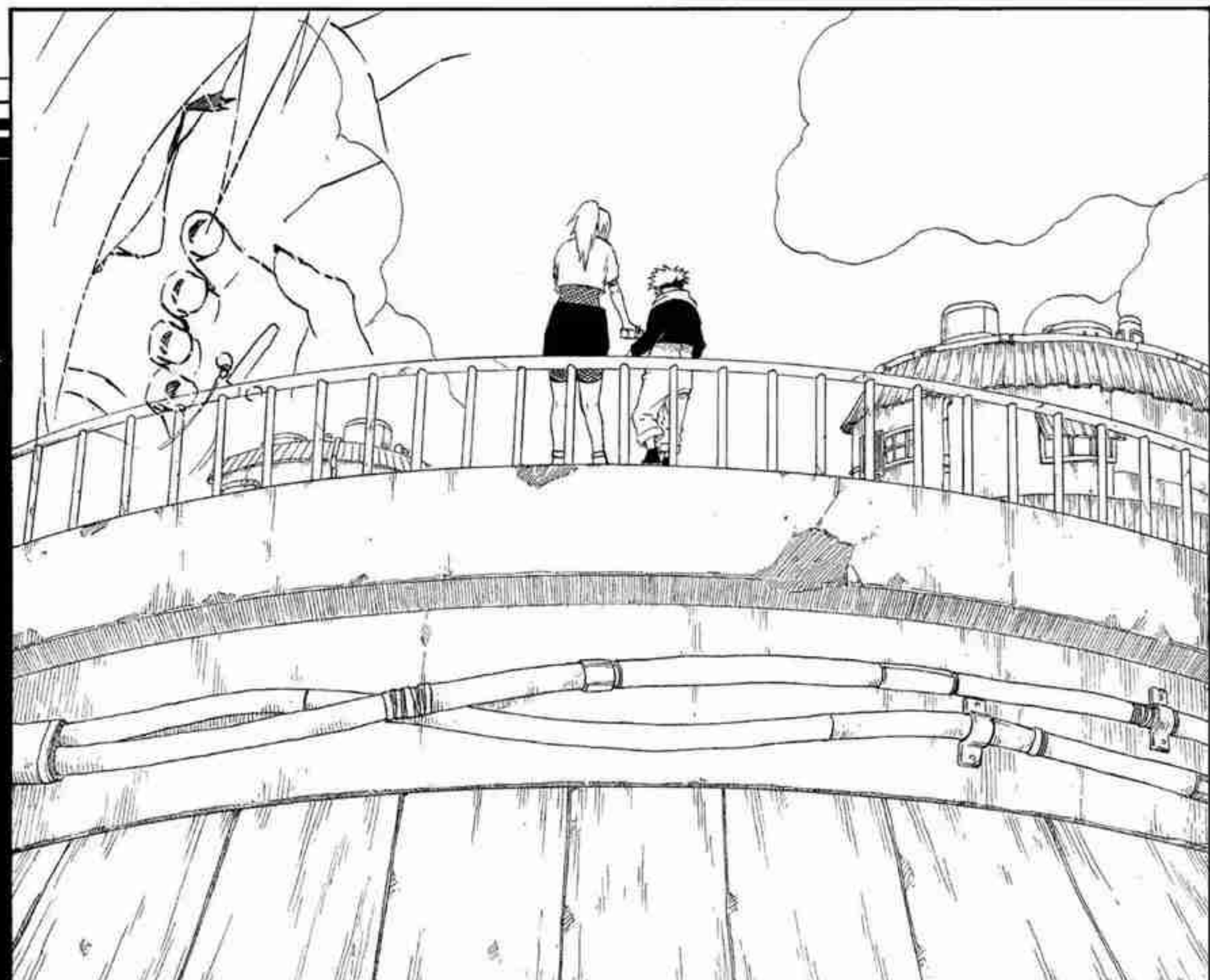
...DIE!!

HUMPH ...

...BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU STILL HANG ON TO THE NECKLACE...
I THOUGHT YOU'D ALREADY LOST IT IN A WAGER.

...


...IT'S A MEMENTO, ISN'T IT...?



OH, COME ON!
YOU ARE STILL A KID!
YOU KNOW, I'M NOT A KID ANY-MORE!
DON'T KEEP GETTING ME BIRTHDAY PRESENTS!
HAPPY 12th BIRTHDAY!
NAWAKI!
THWAP
?
RIP RIP
I BET YOU'RE GONNA LIKE IT!
BESIDES, HURRY UP AND OPEN IT!
!
I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR YOU TO HAVE IT.
I MEAN, YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED IT... SO TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT!
I LOVE YOU, SIS!
UNF
YUP...IT WAS THE FIRST HOKAGE'S, OUR BELOVED GRANDFATHER'S, HOKAGE NECKLACE!
BUT BIG SIS, ISN'T THIS...

YUP!

I'M GONNA BE STRONG LIKE GRANDPA AND ONE DAY BE GRANTED THE TITLE OF HOKAGE!

HO HO... NICE WORDS, BUT A MAN DOESN'T BREAK HIS WORD, YOU KNOW!

'CUZ I'M THE GRANDSON OF THE FIRST HOKAGE, THE BUILDER OF KONOHA-GAKURE!

WHOOSH

IT'S NOT JUST THIS NECKLACE, YOU KNOW!

THE ENTIRE VILLAGE WAS GRANDPA'S TREASURE! AND I'M GOING TO DEFEND IT!

'CUZ TO BE HOKAGE IS MY DREAM.

JUST DO IT. I'VE GOT ONE MORE PRESENT FOR YOU.

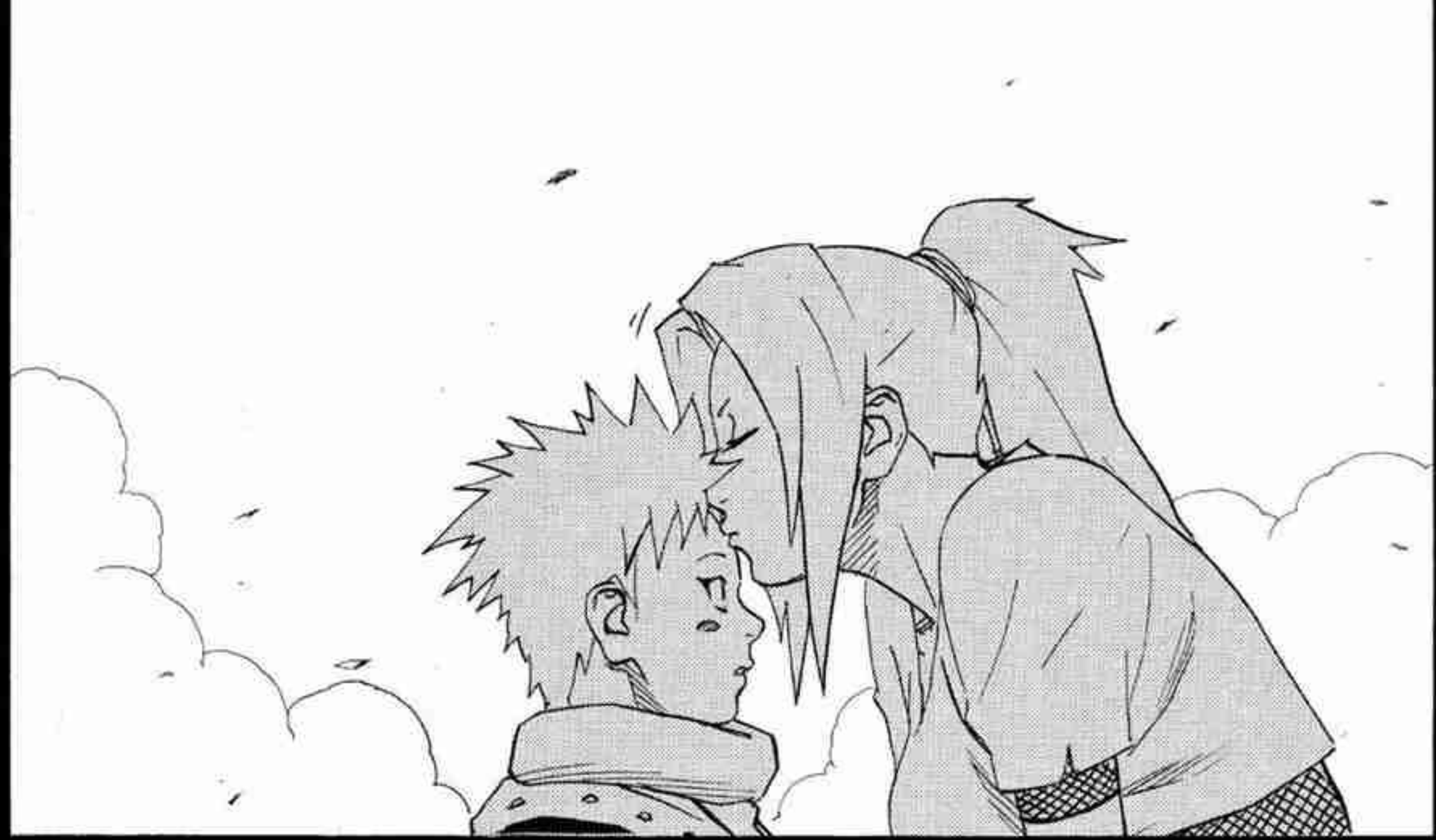
?

SST

TAKE YOUR HEADBAND OFF, NAWAKI.

FFFT

A CHARM TO MAKE YOUR DREAM COME TRUE.



HUF
HUF
HUF

HUF

HUF

YOU PROBABLY OUGHTN'T LOOK AT THE BODY...

!

SPLASH...

THIS IS THE INEVITABLE END FOR A SHINOBI, SINCE THERE ARE NO MEDICS ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.

SWISH SWISH

WE *ARE* IN THE MIDDLE OF A WAR, YOU KNOW...

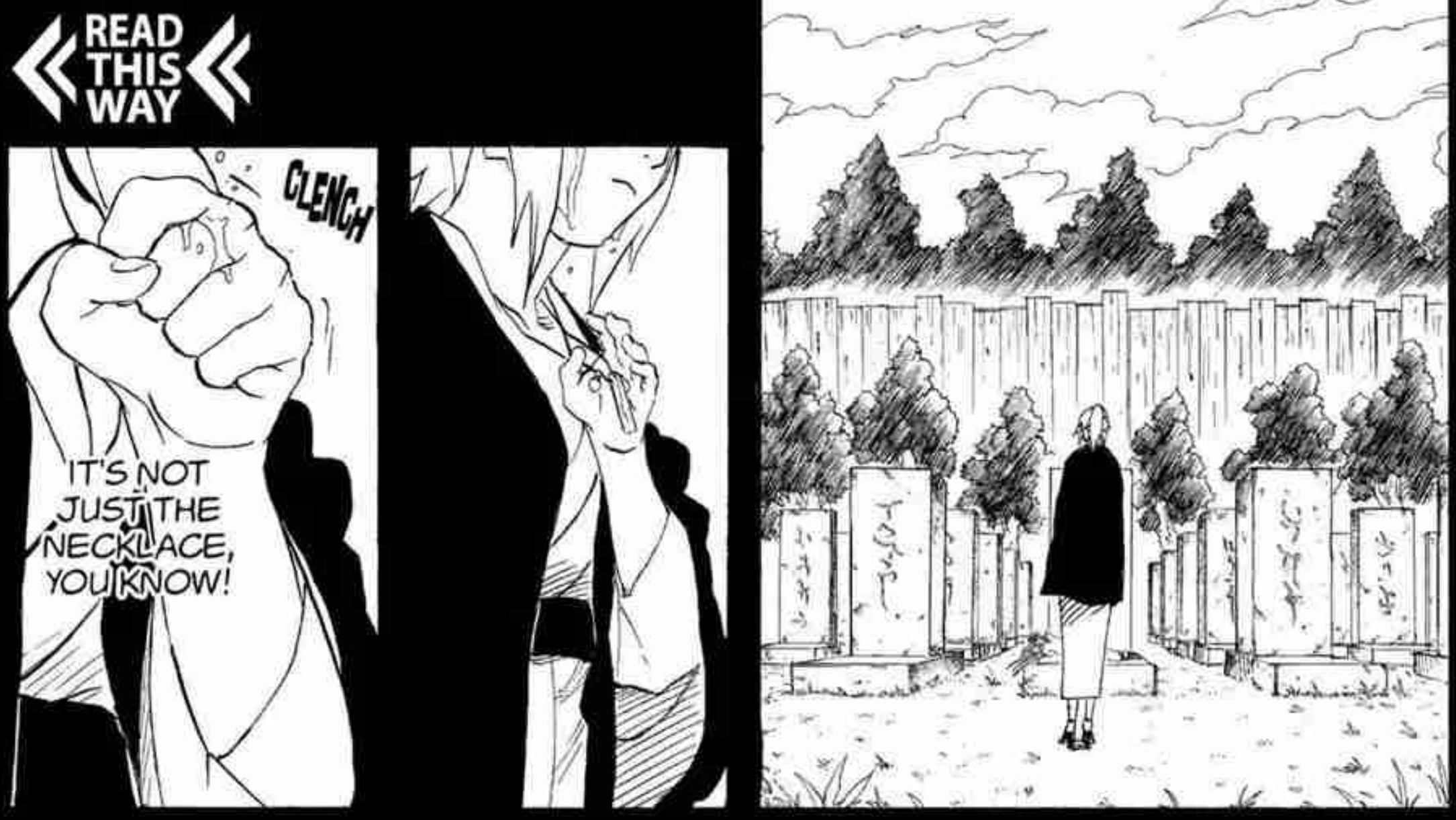
QUIT IT, OROCHI-MARU!

IT'S NOT LIKE SHE COULD TELL JUST BY...

WHY NOT...?

I MEAN, THE VERY NEXT DAY AFTER GETTING PRESENTS.

...BUT... CHILDREN ARE SO EXCITABLE, AREN'T THEY...


READ THIS WAY
CLENCH
IT'S NOT JUST THE NECKLACE, YOU KNOW!

AND I'M GOING TO DEFEND IT!
THE ENTIRE VILLAGE WAS GRANDPA'S TREASURE!

...EXTENDED TOURS IN ENEMY TERRITORY, ON MISSIONS REQUIRING AUTONOMOUS ACTIVITY...
...FIRST AND FOREMOST, FOR THOSE FOUR-MAN CELLS THAT WILL BE SPENDING...

THUS, I BELIEVE THAT THE CULTIVATING OF MEDIC NINJA POSSESSING ADVANCED MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL NINJUTSU...

...THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH A SYSTEM OUGHT TO BE OUR TOP PRIORITY!

...WOULD GREATLY INCREASE BOTH THE MISSION SUCCESS RATE AS WELL AS THE UNIT SURVIVAL RATE.

...I FEEL THAT ASSIGNING A MEDICAL SPECIALIST AS ONE OF THE FOUR UNIT MEMBERS...

THE ENEMY IS *NOT* GOING TO WAIT AROUND FOR US TO...

...BUT WE ARE CURRENTLY IN THE MIDDLE OF A WAR... IN ORDER TO ACTUALIZE A MEDICAL INSTITUTION, NOT ONLY DOES IT TAKE TIME, BUT WE LACK TOO MUCH KNOW-HOW AT THE PRESENT TIME AS WELL.

MMM...

FOR SURE, THE NEED IS THERE, AS YOU SAY...

!

SO WHEN ARE WE EVER GONNA...

I AGREE WITH HER COMPLETELY.

HEY, LISTEN UP, GEEZER!

BA

M

WE OUGHT TO LEARN SOMETHING FROM THEM.

I DO NOT WANT TO WASTE THE DEATHS OF THOSE SHINOBI WHO HAVE ALREADY SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES.

...

YOU ARE CORRECT, YOU KNOW.

U...UM... THANKS FOR EARLIER.

!

...

REALLY? BUT WHERE DO YOU LIVE...?

HUH?

IT'S GETTING LATE... YOU WANT ME TO ESCORT YOU HOME...?

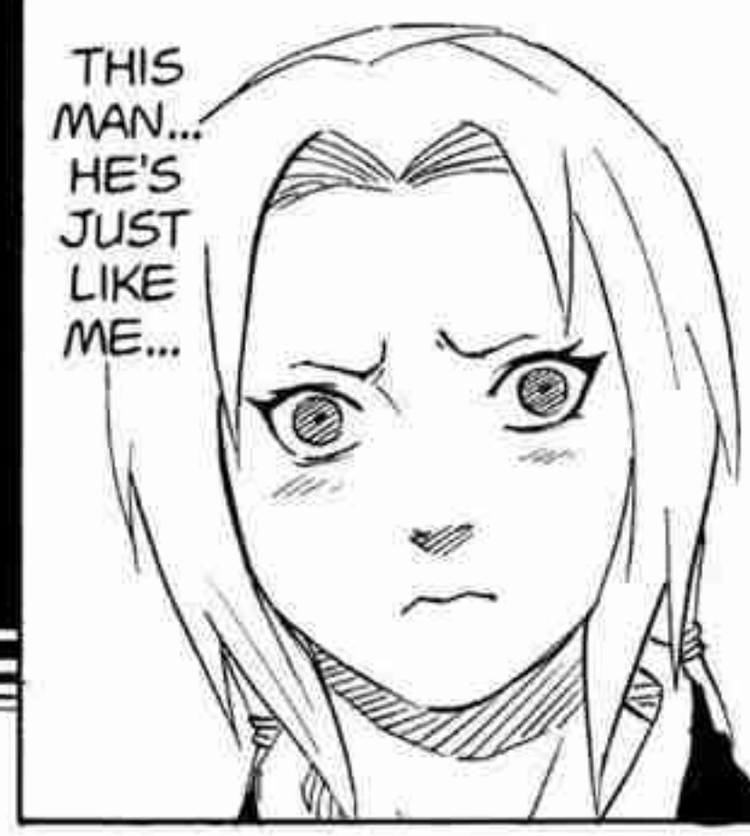
UM...

IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

...NO, REALLY... I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ANYWAY...

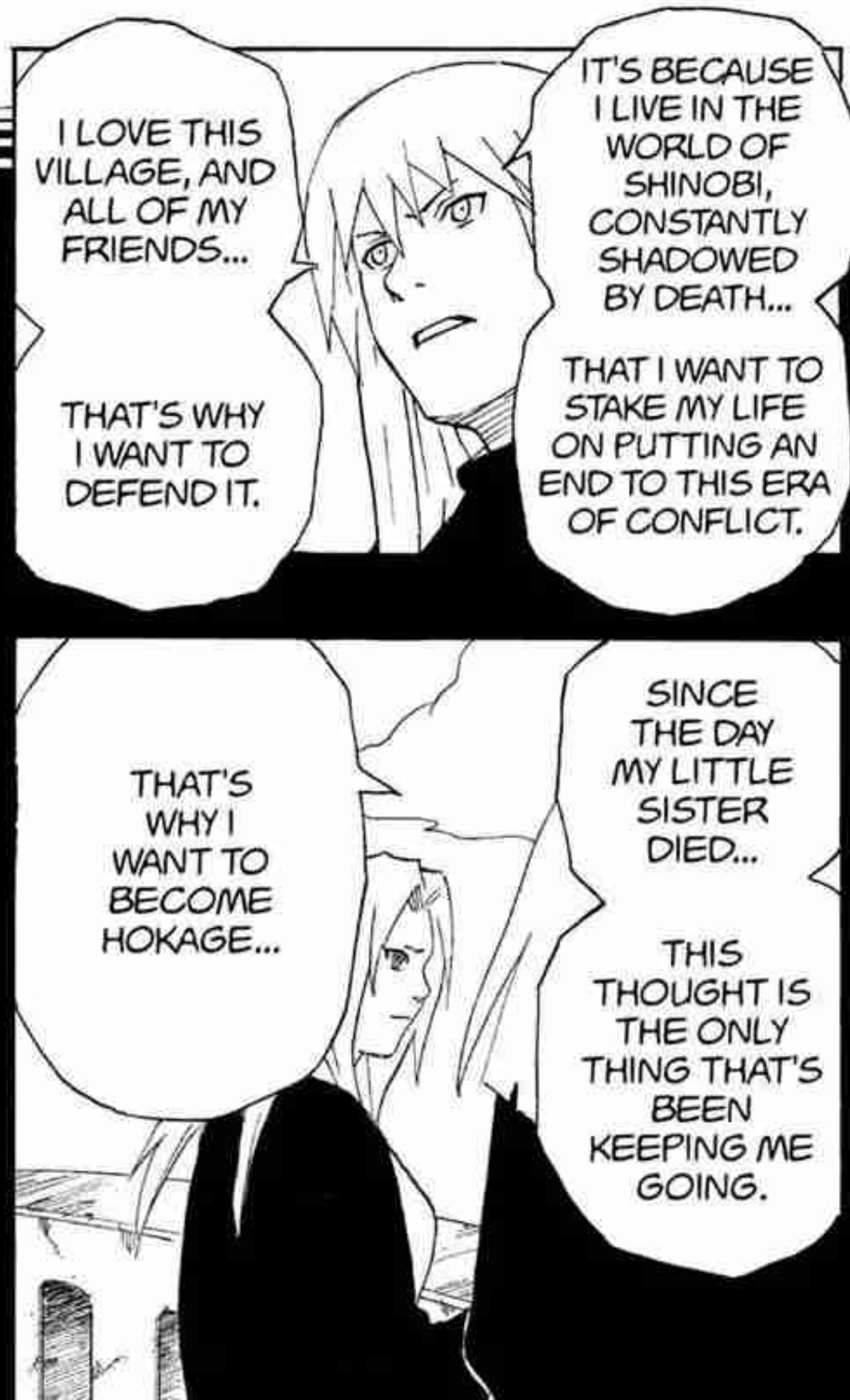
THEN DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

...


THIS MAN... HE'S JUST LIKE ME...

THIS WAS THE STREET I USED TO ALWAYS TAKE ESCORTING MY LITTLE SISTER TO THE ACADEMY.
IT'S MY FAVORITE PATH.
AND BESIDES...

TOMORROW, OUR MISSIONS WILL TAKE US TO THE FRONT LINE...


I LOVE THIS VILLAGE, AND ALL OF MY FRIENDS...
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO DEFEND IT.
IT'S BECAUSE I LIVE IN THE WORLD OF SHINOBI, CONSTANTLY SHADOWED BY DEATH...
THAT I WANT TO STAKE MY LIFE ON PUTTING AN END TO THIS ERA OF CONFLICT.
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO BECOME HOKAGE...
SINCE THE DAY MY LITTLE SISTER DIED...
THIS THOUGHT IS THE ONLY THING THAT'S BEEN KEEPING ME GOING.

...ISN'T THE ONLY JOB OF A SHINOBI, YOU KNOW.
TO FIGHT AND LOSE THOSE WE LOVE...
...I KNOW...

BECAUSE TO BECOME THE PROTECTOR... THE HOKAGE, IS MY DREAM.

CLENCH!

DAN...

...!

...ACCEPT THIS...

I WANT YOU TO...

...TSUNADE...
BZZZZZ
KURPLA
HHHHHHHS

DON'T TALK, DAN!
BZZZZZ

...TH...THERE'S STILL... SO MUCH I WANT TO...DO.
HAK HAK
...I D...DON'T... WANT TO DIE YET...

EVEN WITH ALL OF PRODIGAL THREE TSUNADE'S MEDICAL NINJUTSU ON BOARD, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO RE-FORM AN ENTIRE ORGAN...
HIS KIDNEY'S BEEN COMPLETELY BLOWN TO BITS... IT'S NO USE...

...REALLY...? OH, GOOD...

...YOU'RE IN THE CLEAR NOW... YOU'LL HEAL, DAN!
DON'T WORRY, I'VE STOPPED THE BLEEDING!

...I...CAN'T AFFORD...TO DIE...HERE...

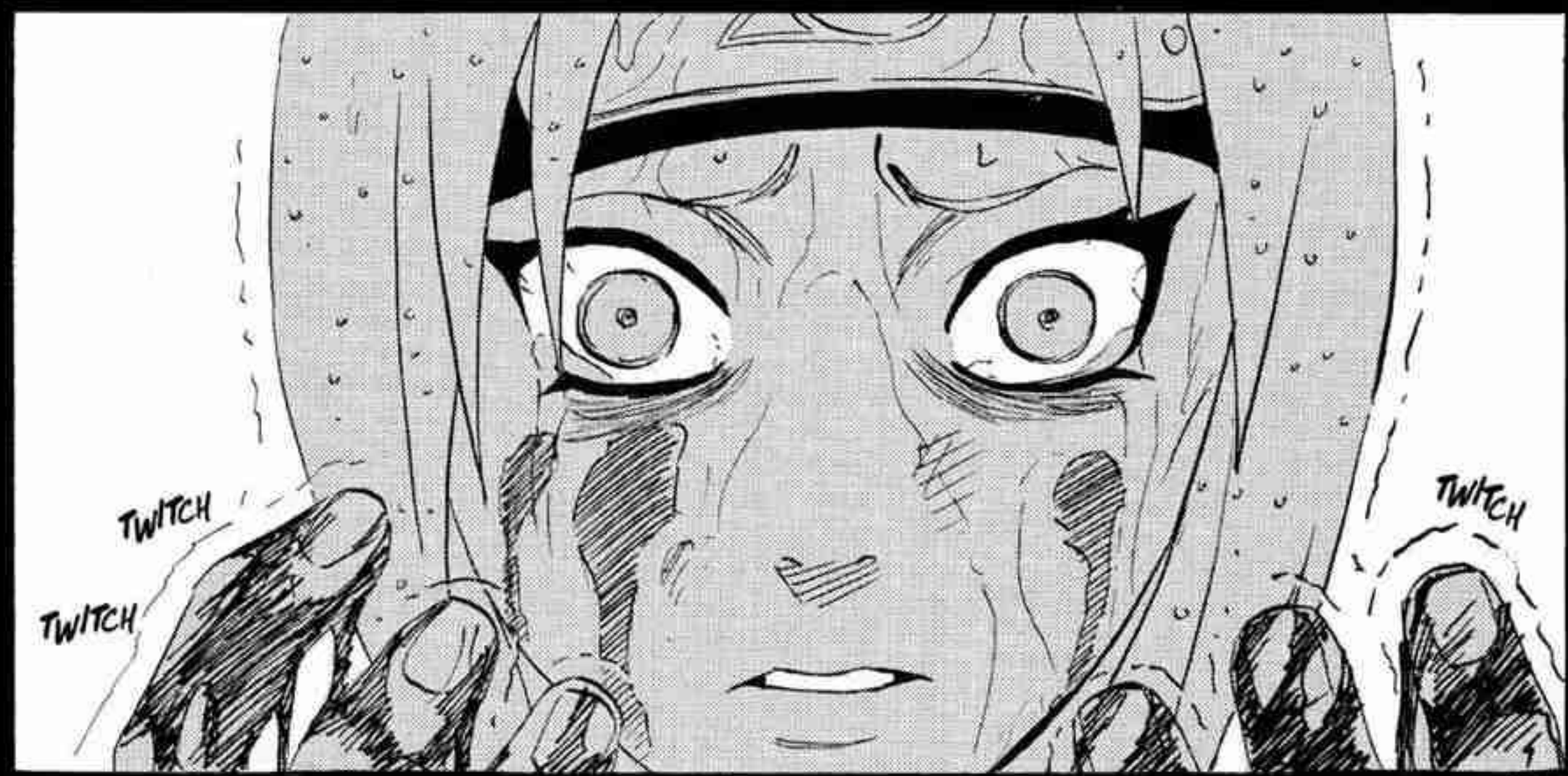
ZPURT
ZPURT
BZZZZZZ

UGH ...!
UNH...
BZZZZZZZ
...

ENOUGH, HE'S DEAD ALREADY!
I SAID, STOP IT...!!

KURPLASHH
STOP!
STOP IT...!
STOP IT... STOP SPURTING...!
HHH
STOP!
STOP!

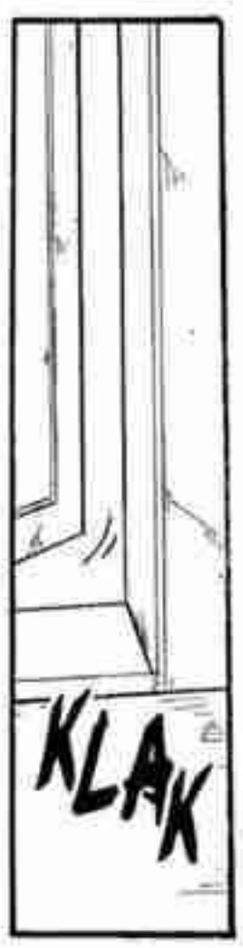
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH

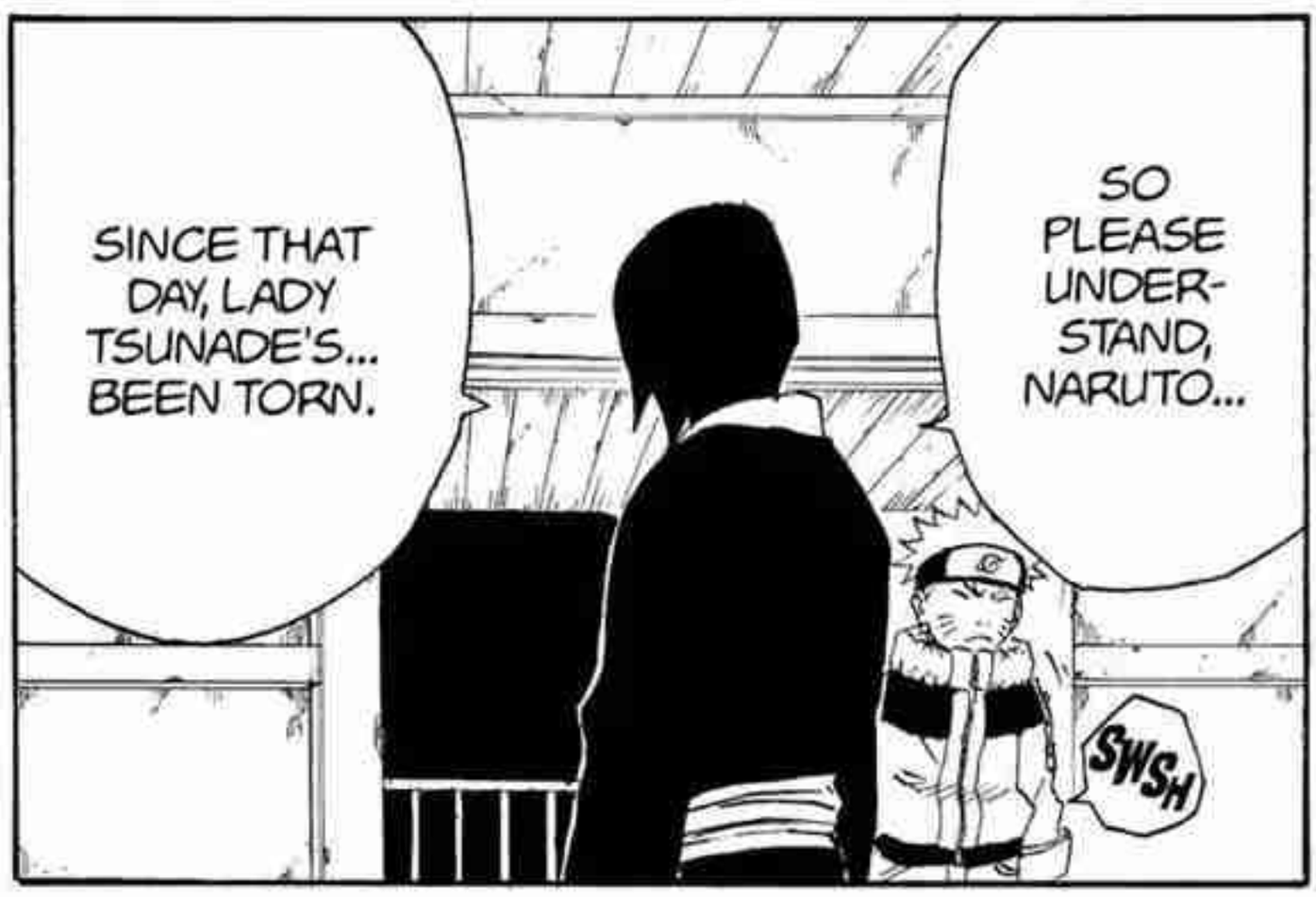

TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH

民宿

SHMP

?!
NARUTO ...?


KLAK


SINCE THAT DAY, LADY TSUNADE'S... BEEN TORN.
SO PLEASE UNDER-STAND, NARUTO...
SWSH

...TRAIN!!
I'M GONNA GO...

THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
MY PERSONAL HISTORY, PART 29

I FEEL LIKE I GEEKED TOO MUCH IN MY PERSONAL HISTORY PARTS 27 AND 28, SO I THINK I'LL WRITE AN EMOTIONAL STORY THIS TIME.

IN ANY CASE, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING MY MANGA *KARAKURI* WINNING THE HOP ☆ STEP AWARD, MY ASSIGNED EDITOR MR. YAHAGI ASKED ME TO DRAW A DRAFT (KIND OF A ROUGH SKETCH OF A MANGA) OF A STAND-ALONE STORY. WHEN HE SAW *WANDERING DETOUR*, THE BIG MISTAKE OF A MANGA THAT I JUST DREW WILLY-NILLY, MR. YAHAGI SIMPLY SAID, THIS...ISN'T SHONEN MAGAZINE MATERIAL! A-HA-HA-HA. AND I WAS THE MASOCHISTIC NEWBIE WHO REPLIED, SO IT'S A REJECT... HUH ACTUALLY REVELING IN THE REVERBERATION OF THE WORD REJECTION AND EVEN HAPPILY SELF-PROCLAIMING THAT IT WAS A REJECT (SEE VOLUME 4, PAGE 26'S KISHIMOTO MASASHI'S FIRST MANGA REJECT SPECIAL).

LATER ON, MR. YAHAGI ENCOURAGED ME WITH WHY DON'T YOU DRAW A MORE SHÔNEN-STYLE BATTLE EPIC! SO I EQUALLY EAGERLY REPLIED, RIGHT! AND WANTING TO MEET MR. YAHAGI'S EXPECTATIONS, I IMMEDIATELY SET OUT TO THINK UP A NEW VERSION OF MY WINNING WORK, *KARAKURI*. OF COURSE THE STORY OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL KID AND HIS MISADVENTURES ON THE WAY HOME FROM SCHOOL ISN'T ENTERTAINING! WHAT A FOOL I HAD BEEN! I HADN'T UNDERSTOOD ANYTHING! AND THE REGRET WENT ON... SO I QUICKLY DREW AN ALTERNATE VERSION OF *KARAKURI* AND MAILED IT IN...THIS TIME, FOR SURE...

MR. YAHAGI SIMPLY SAID, ER...I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT AT ALL! A-HA-HA-HA. SO AGAIN, I SELF-PROFESSED, ...WHICH MEANS...IT'S REJECTED, RIGHT...AND ONCE AGAIN, I HADN'T MET MR. YAHAGI'S EXPECTATIONS. ...THIS TIME, I LOST MY EAGERNESS. I BECAME QUITE DEPRESSED, IN FACT. ...REALITY IS HARSH. ...THEN ONE DAY, I RECEIVED A LETTER FROM MR. YAHAGI. WHEN I EXAMINED IT, I REALIZED IT CONTAINED TWO FULL PAGES OF POINTERS ABOUT HOW TO DRAW MANGA AND OTHER ADVICE. AND, WHEN I GOT TO THE END OF THAT LETTER...MY EYES STARTED WELLING A BIT WITH TEARS. HERE'S WHAT IT SAID...

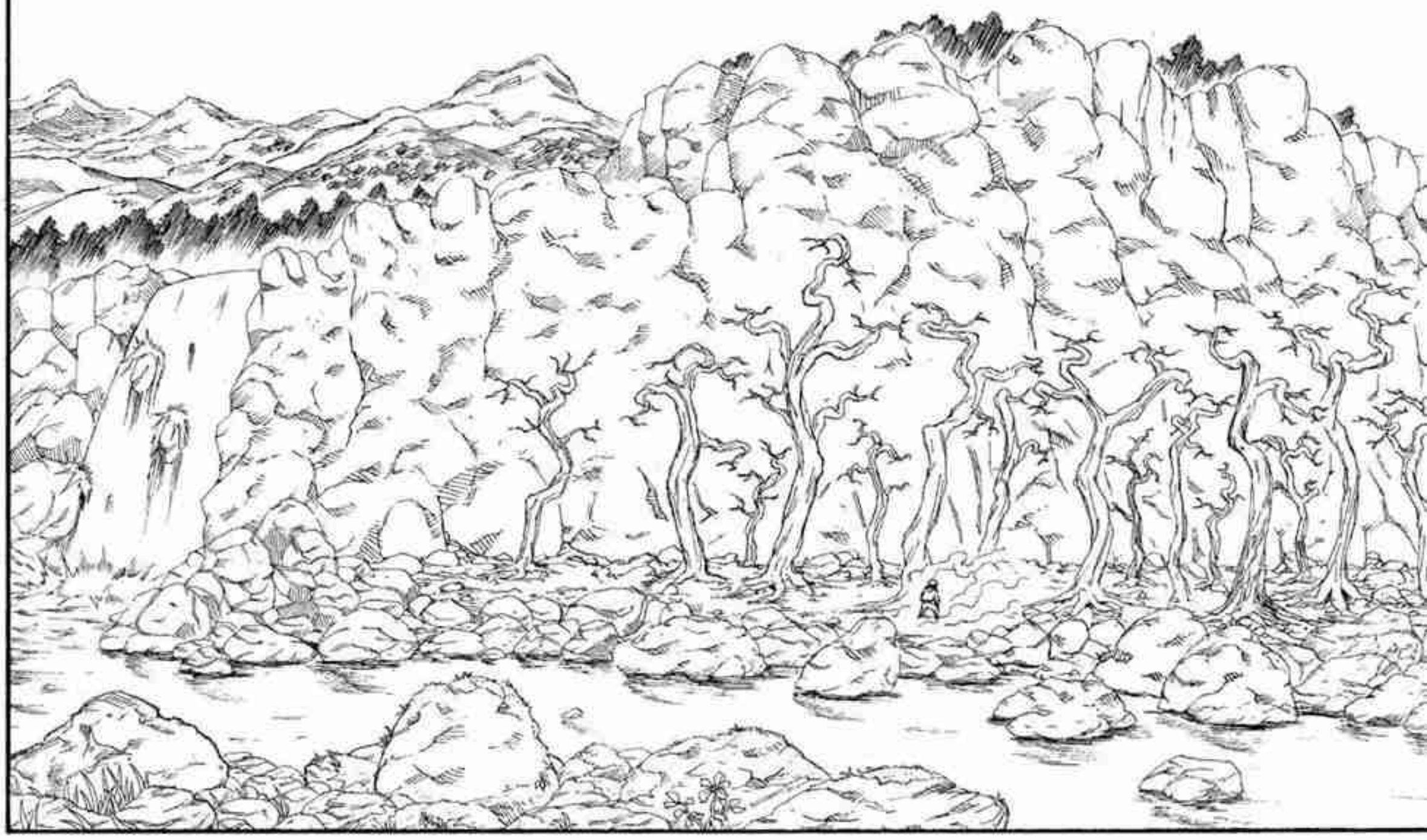
"YOU DO HAVE TALENT. PLEASE KEEP TRYING."

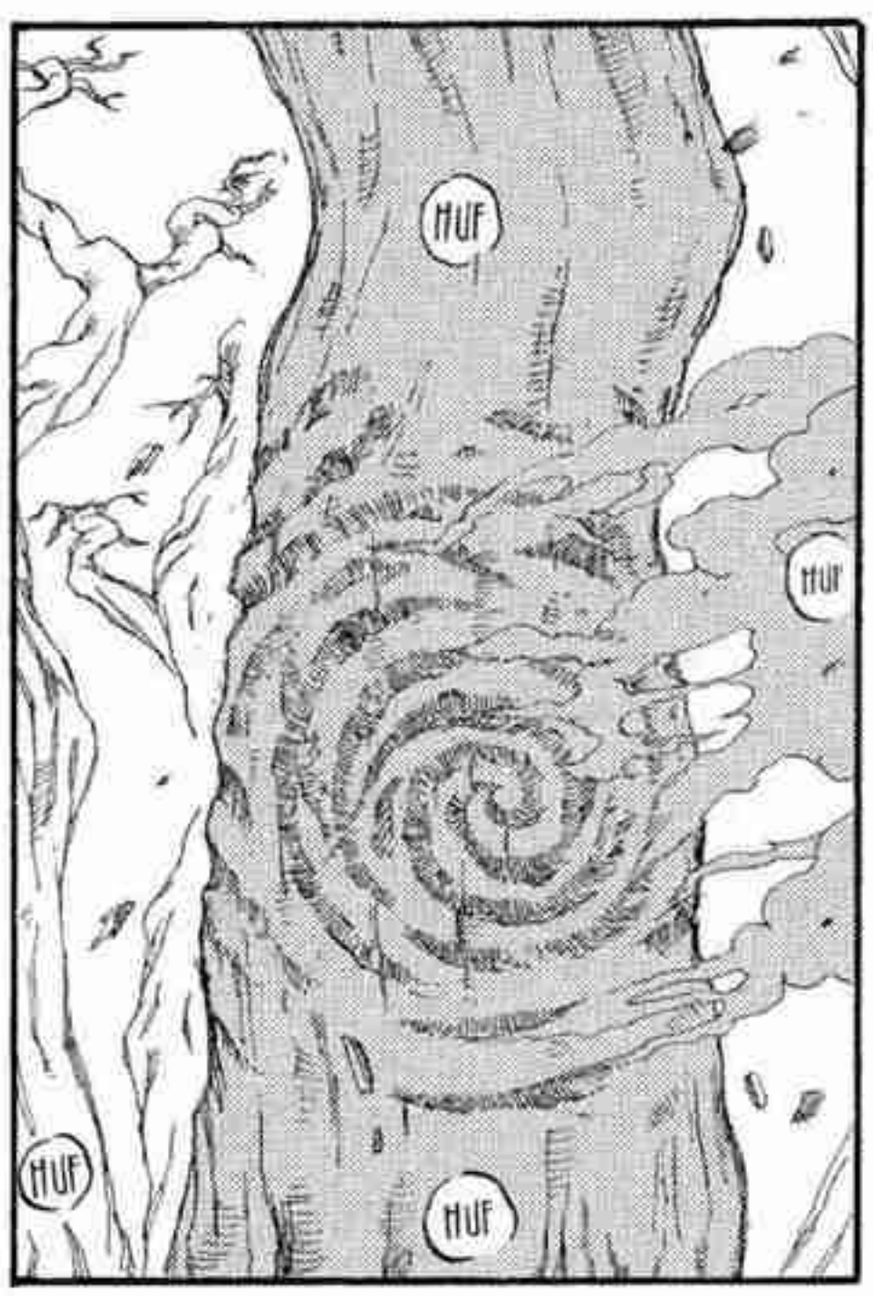
EVEN IF IT WERE A LIE OR FLATTERY, IT STILL MADE ME HAPPY! I HAD BEEN DEPRESSED, BUT IT RENEWED MY DETERMINATION! IMMEDIATELY, I STARTED DRAWING A DRAFT. AND THEN, WHEN I FOUND OUT THAT MR. YAHAGI HIMSELF WAS PLANNING TO PAY ME A PERSONAL VISIT TO MY HOUSE (IN KYUSHU) TO GO OVER IT, I PUT GREAT DRIVE INTO MY DRAFT, AND WENT TO MEET MR. YAHAGI AT MY LOCAL MISTER DONUT. I'M NOT GOING TO WASTE THOSE TEARS I SHED, I SWORE TO MYSELF! I PUT GREAT ENERGY INTO THIS DRAFT! THIS TIME FOR SURE!

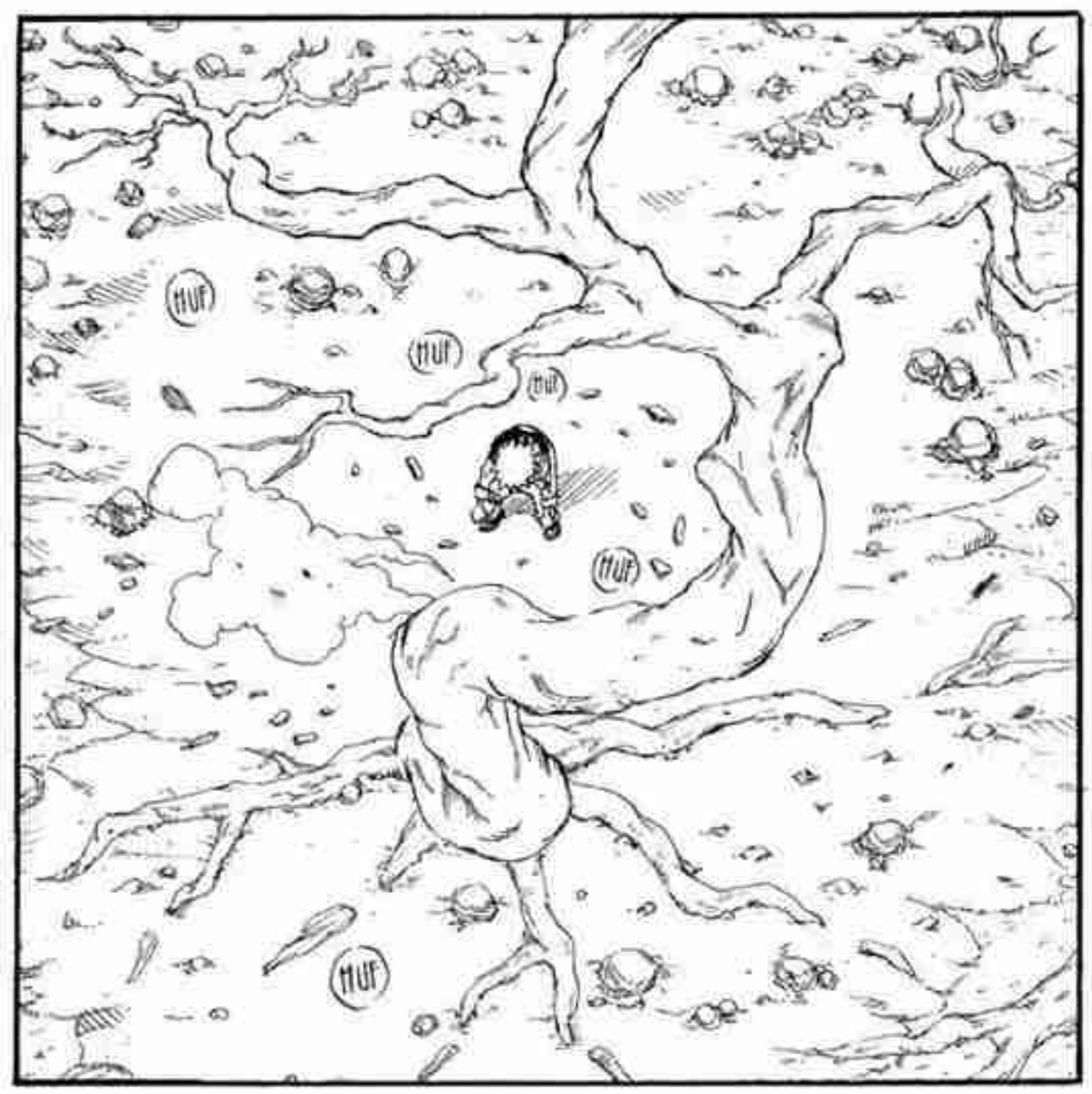
HE TOOK A LOOK AT THE MANGA, THEN UTTERED, "THIS ISN'T REALLY MANGA..."

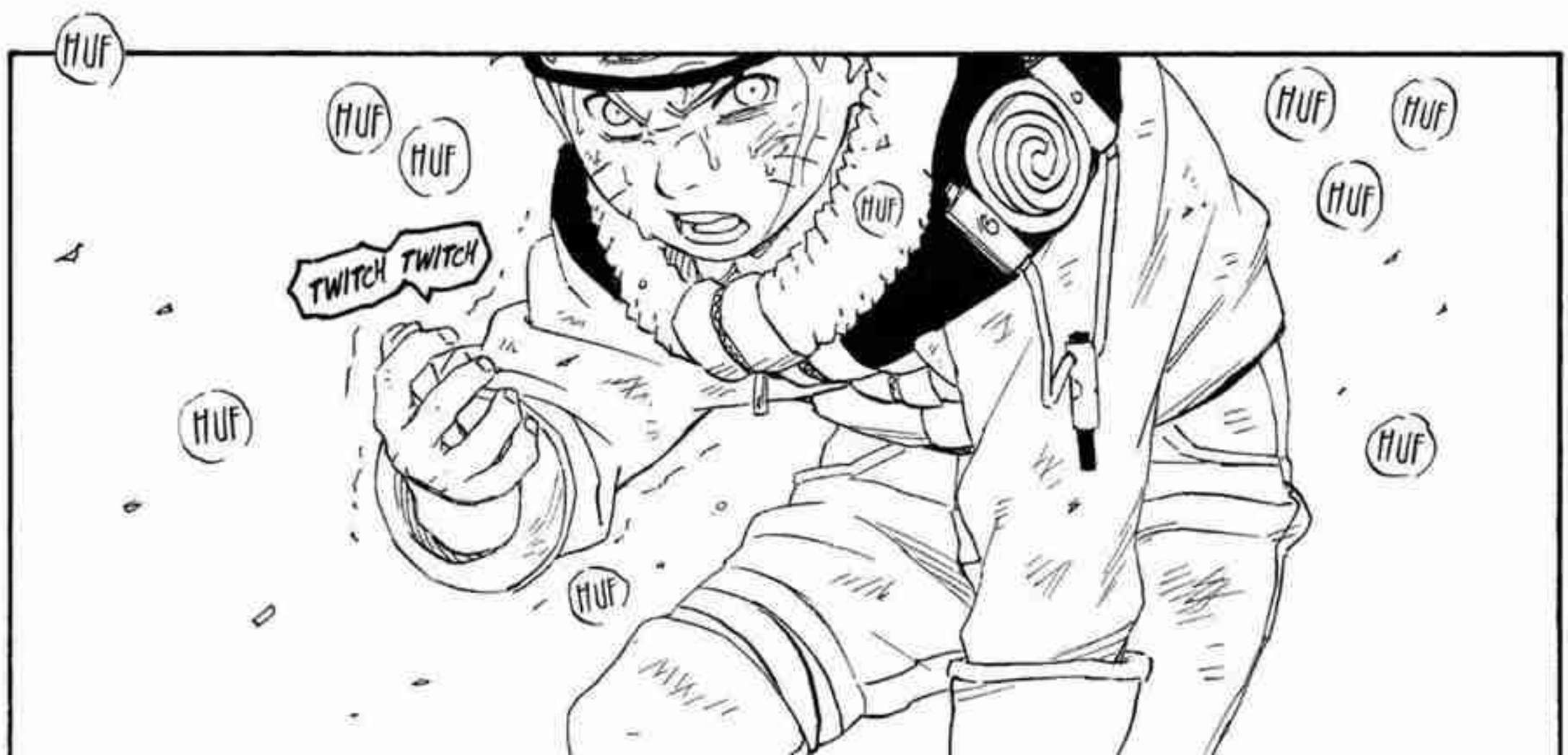
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY ANYMORE...SINCE THEN, I'VE GOTTEN DEPRESSED COUNTLESS TIMES, BUT EACH TIME I WOULD PULL OUT THAT LETTER AND REREAD IT TO THE END AGAIN...IT'S A PRECIOUS LETTER THAT I STILL PEEK AT FROM TIME TO TIME EVEN NOW.

Number 161: Tsunade's Choice!!

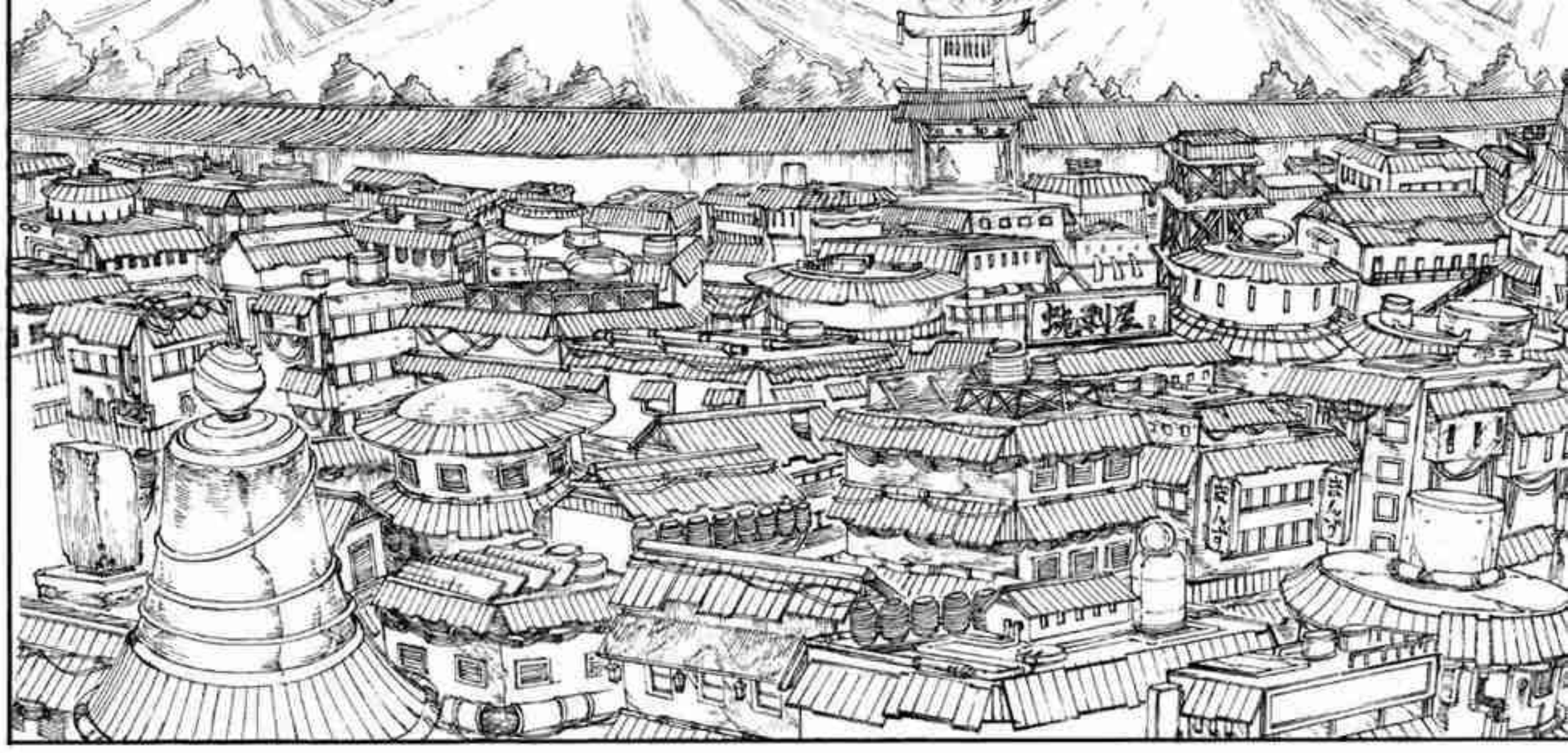


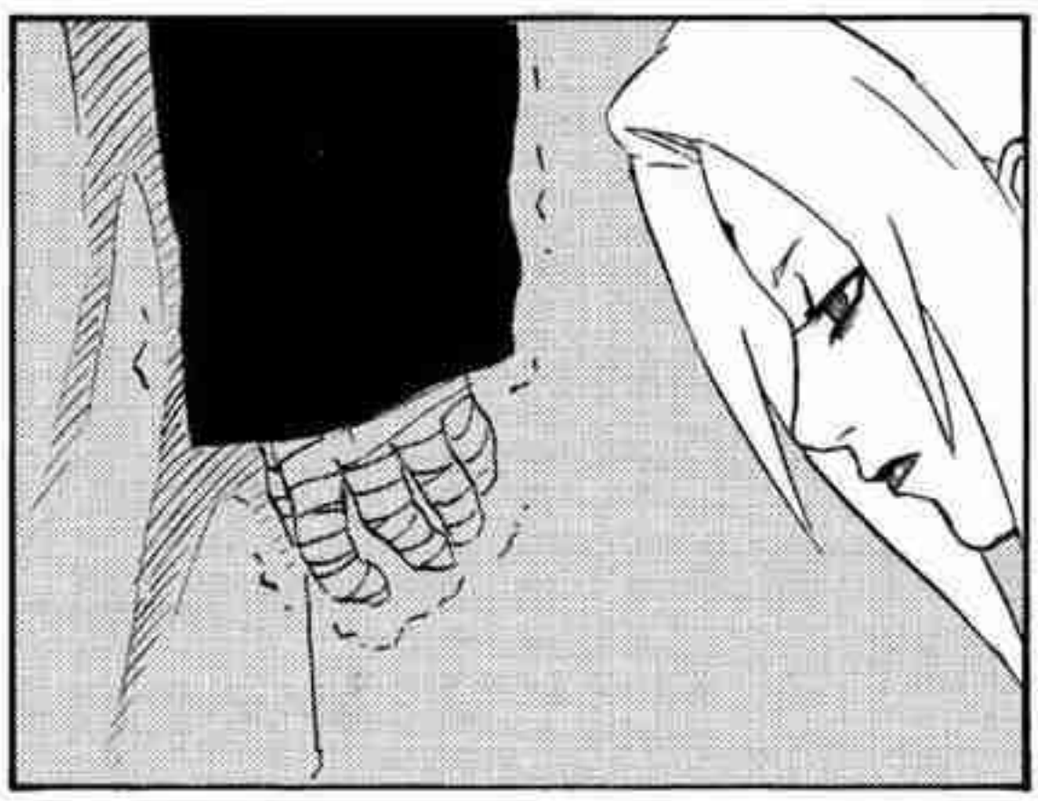

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF


HUF
HUF
HUF
TWITCH TWITCH
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

READ THIS WAY
THAT TSUNADE... I FEEL ROTTEN!
OWW!
YAAWW... OWW, MY HEAD...
民宿
HE'S SUCH... A FOOL.
THAT NARUTO... IT SEEMS HE NEVER CAME BACK LAST NIGHT, HUH...
SCRATCH SCRATCH
...
KLAK-KLAK
KLATTER
...

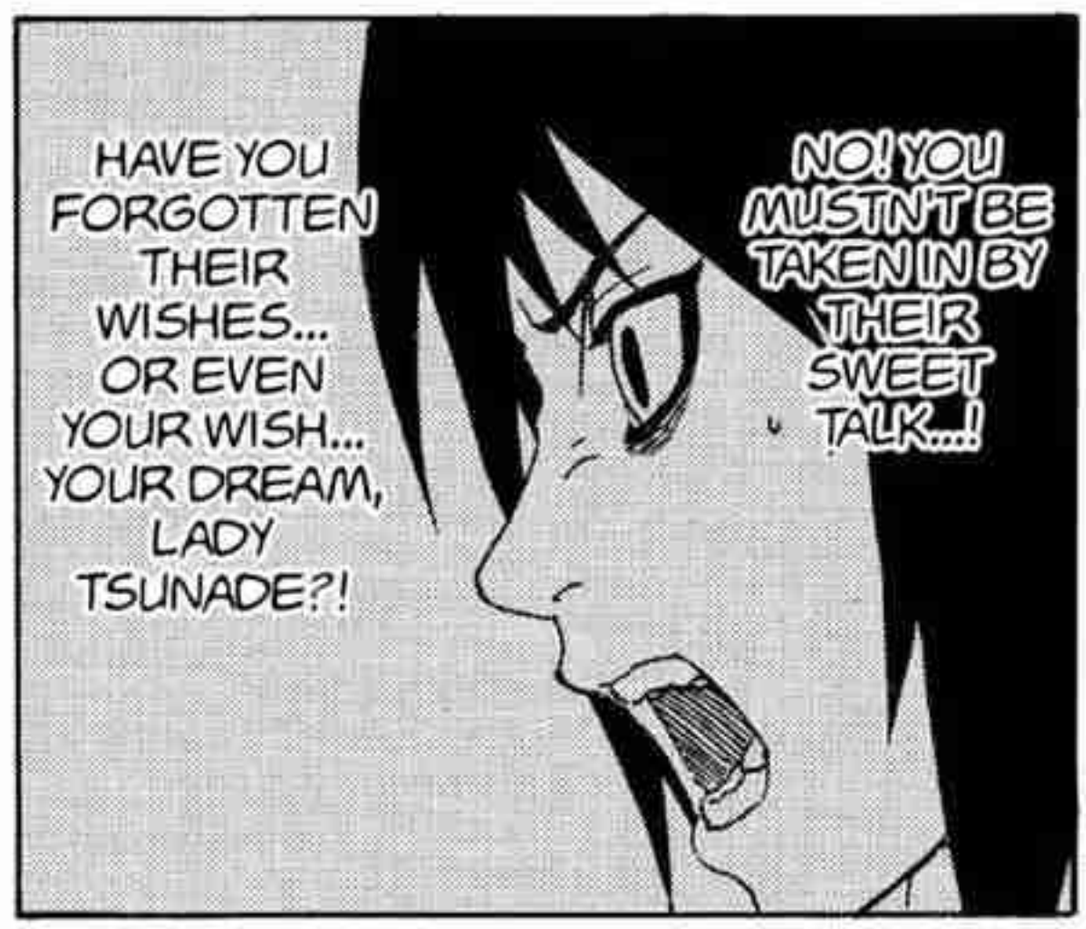


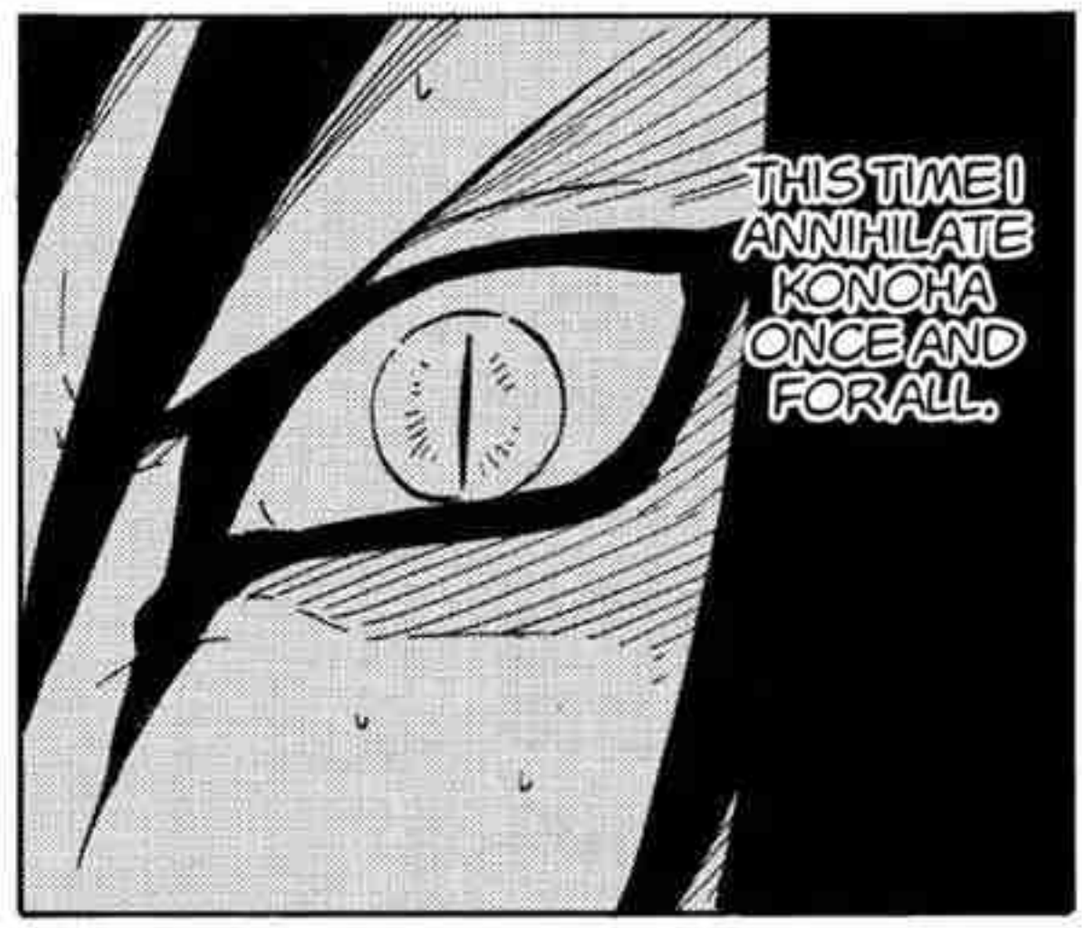


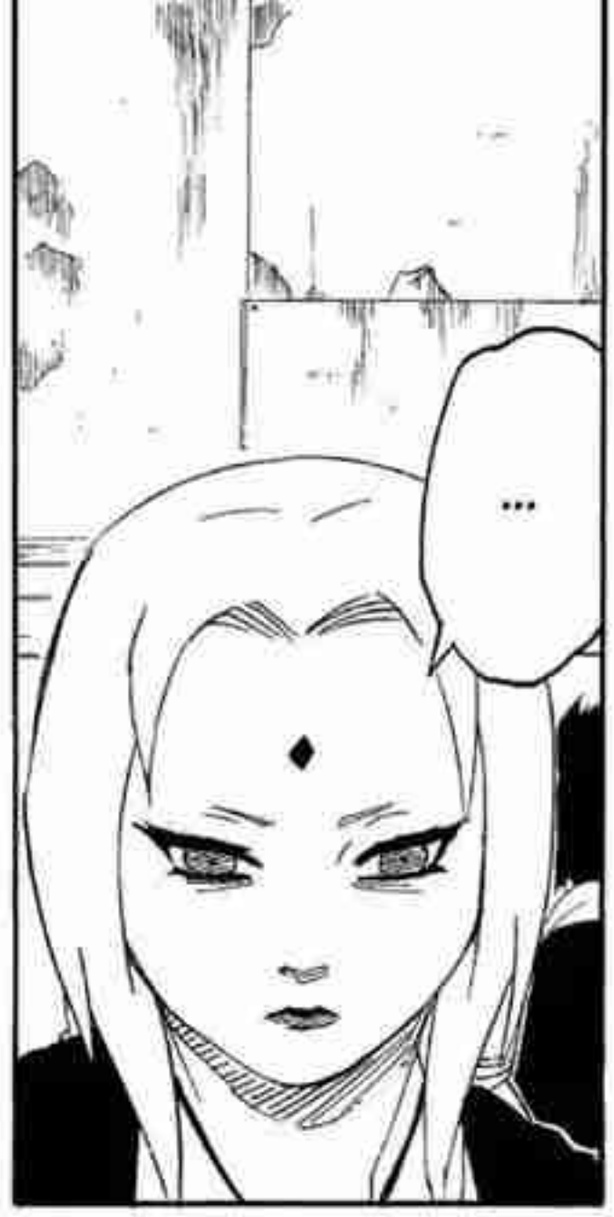
WON'T YOU CONSIDER... OUR OFFER?

I'VE LEARNED THE FORBIDDEN JUTSU...
...I CAN REANIMATE YOUR BELOVED LITTLE BROTHER AND LOVER BOTH.

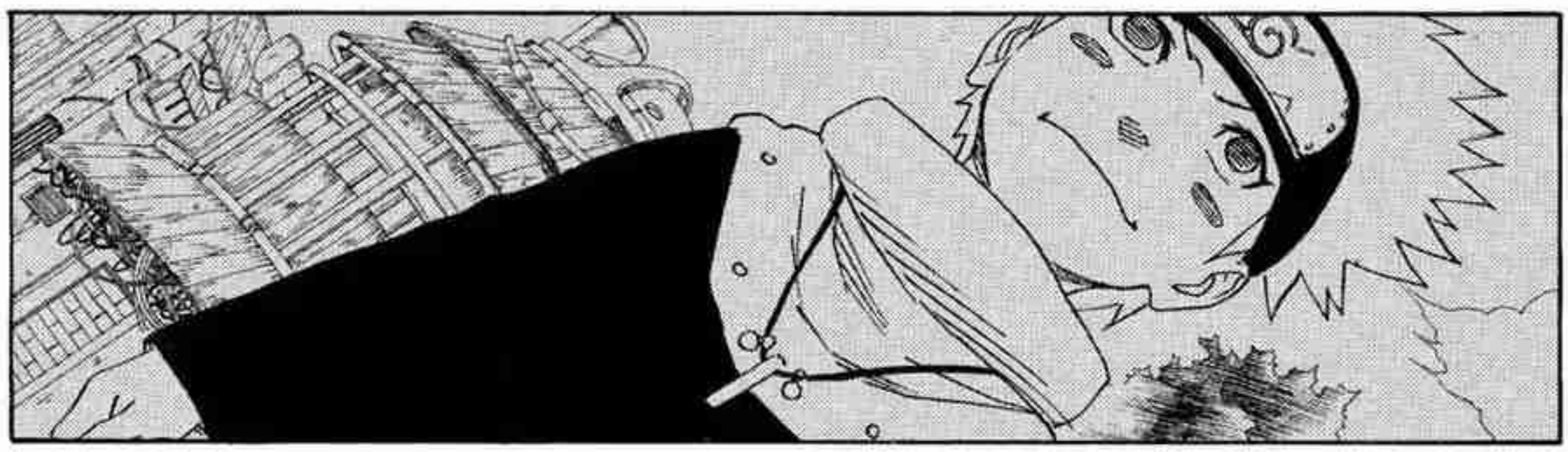
DON'T YOU WANT TO SEE THEM AGAIN, TSUNADE...?

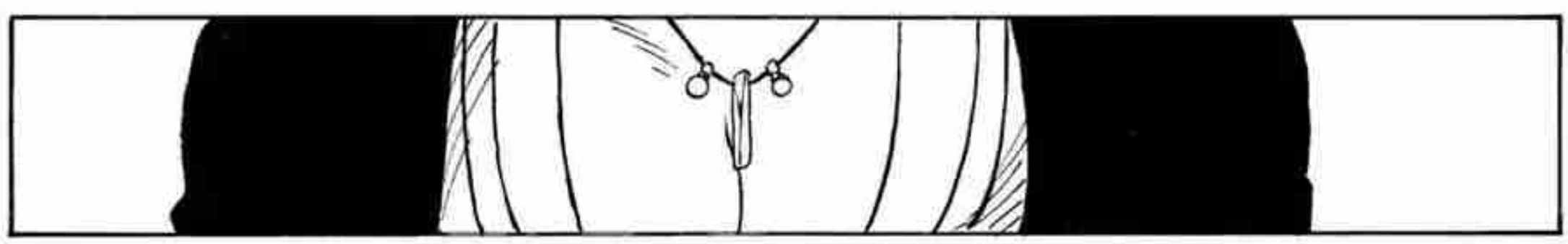


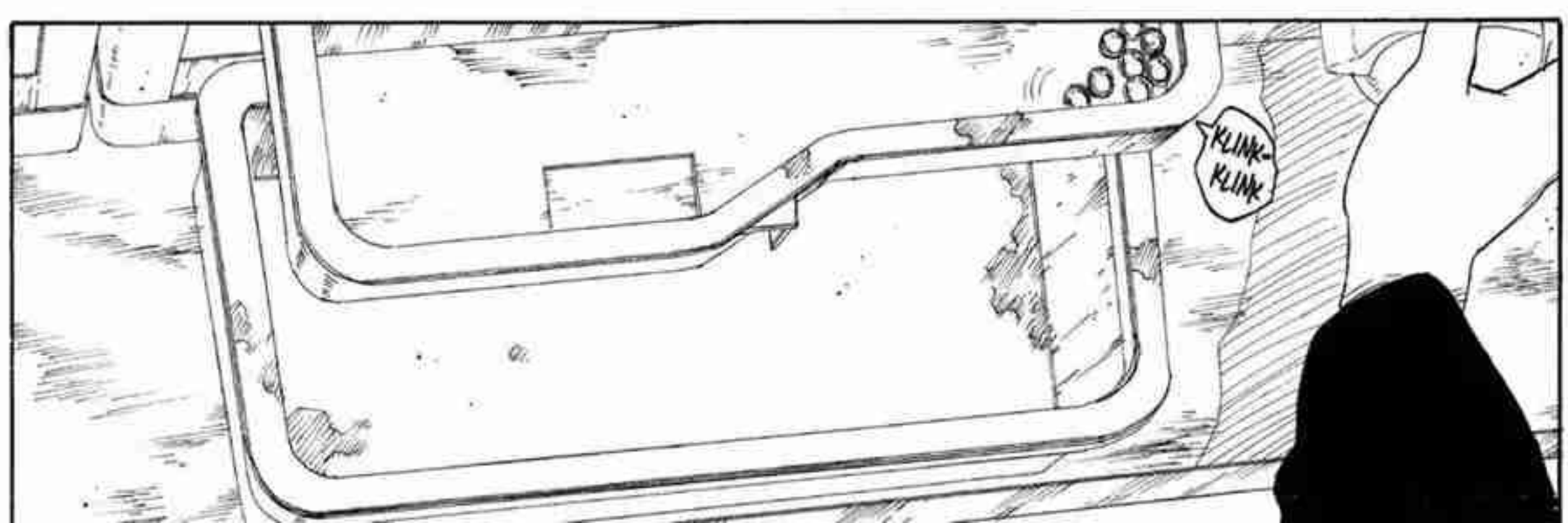


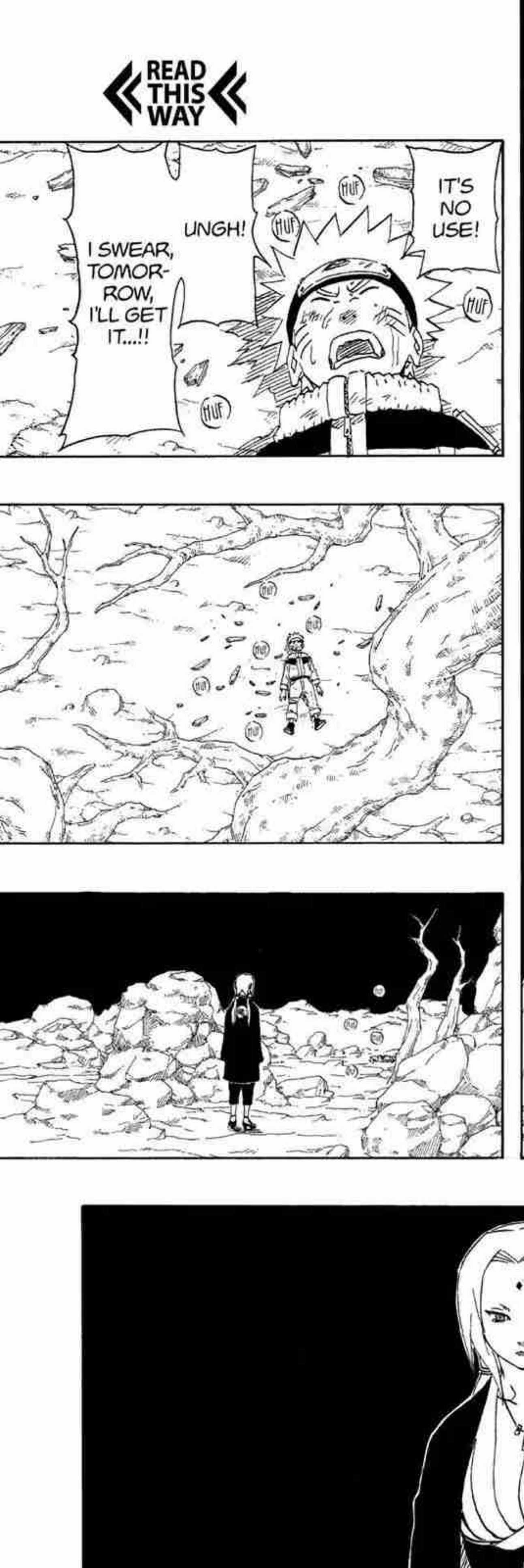

...

...THAT WAS THE DREAM THEY FOUGHT FOR!
...THEY WANTED AN END TO TURBULENT DAYS AND TO SEE THE VILLAGE PROSPER. IT WAS THOSE IDEALS...
EVERY ONE OF THE PREVIOUS HOKAGE RISKED THEIR LIVES TO PROTECT THE VILLAGE OF KONOHA AND ALL THOSE WHO LIVE THERE...



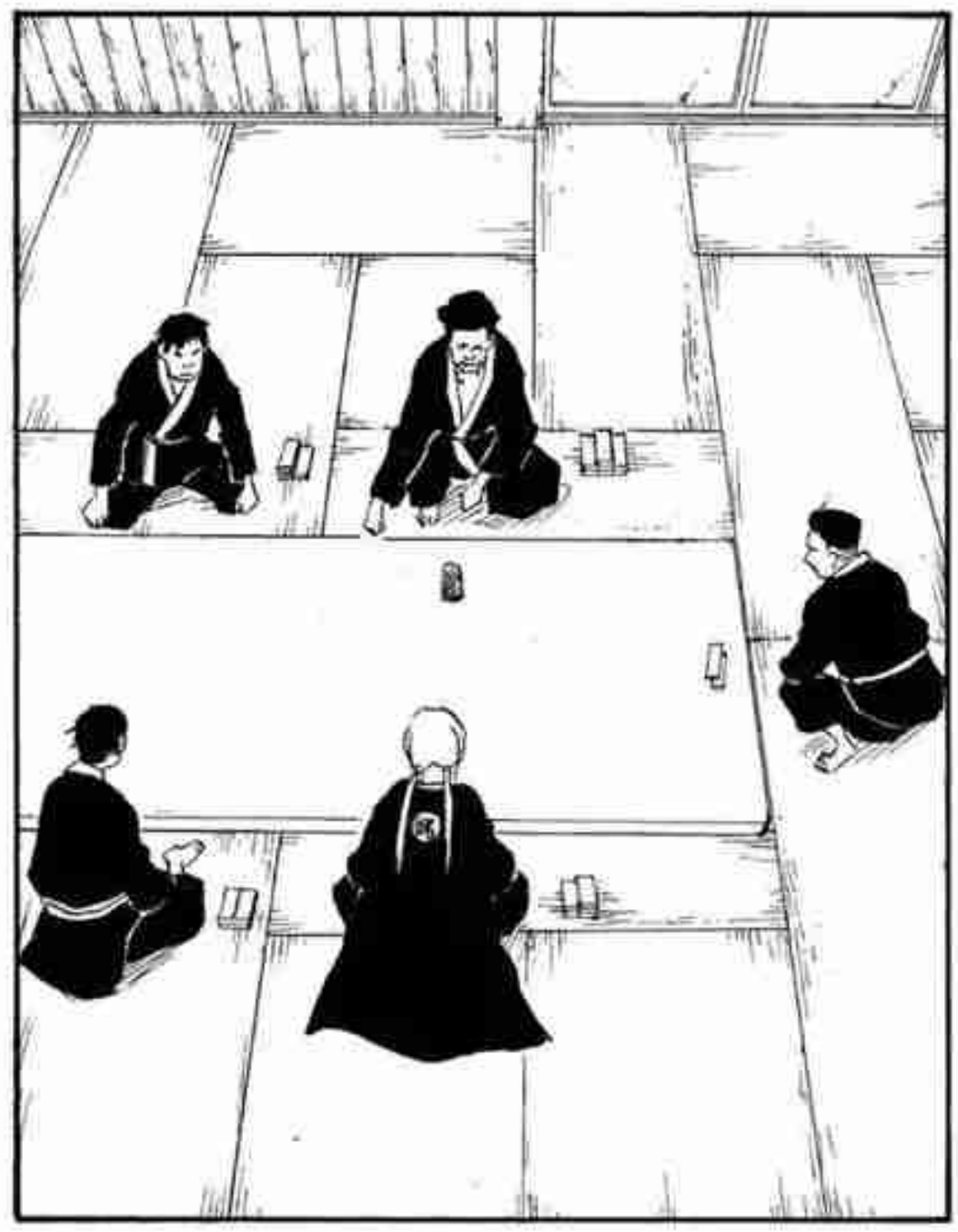



KLINK-KLINK


READ THIS WAY
I SWEAR, TOMOR-ROW, I'LL GET IT...!!
UNGH!
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
IT'S NO USE!
THE SECOND NIGHT AFTER THE WAGER WITH TSUNADE...
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
...

...OH AND JUST SO YOU KNOW, THIS FORBIDDEN JUTSU REQUIRES LIVE SACRIFICES... SO PLEASE HAVE TWO PEOPLE PREPARED ON YOUR END...

...YOU NEED NOT GIVE US YOUR ANSWER THIS VERY MINUTE... HOWEVER, WE WOULD LIKE A RESPONSE IN ONE WEEK'S TIME.



HOWEVER... IF SHE SHOULD DECLINE...
IF SHE ACQUIESCES TO OUR TERMS, THEN YOUR ARMS WILL BE HEALED AND YOU CAN RESUME OPERATION DESTROY KONOHA IMMEDIATELY, LORD OROCHIMARU...
PLUS, SHE WILL BE REUNITED WITH THE TWO PEOPLE SHE LOVES MOST.

I WONDER WHICH IT WILL BE...

...I'LL MAKE HER FIX MY ARMS...
...EVEN IF BY FORCE...

...I'M NOT WORRIED...
...HUMPH...

LEER

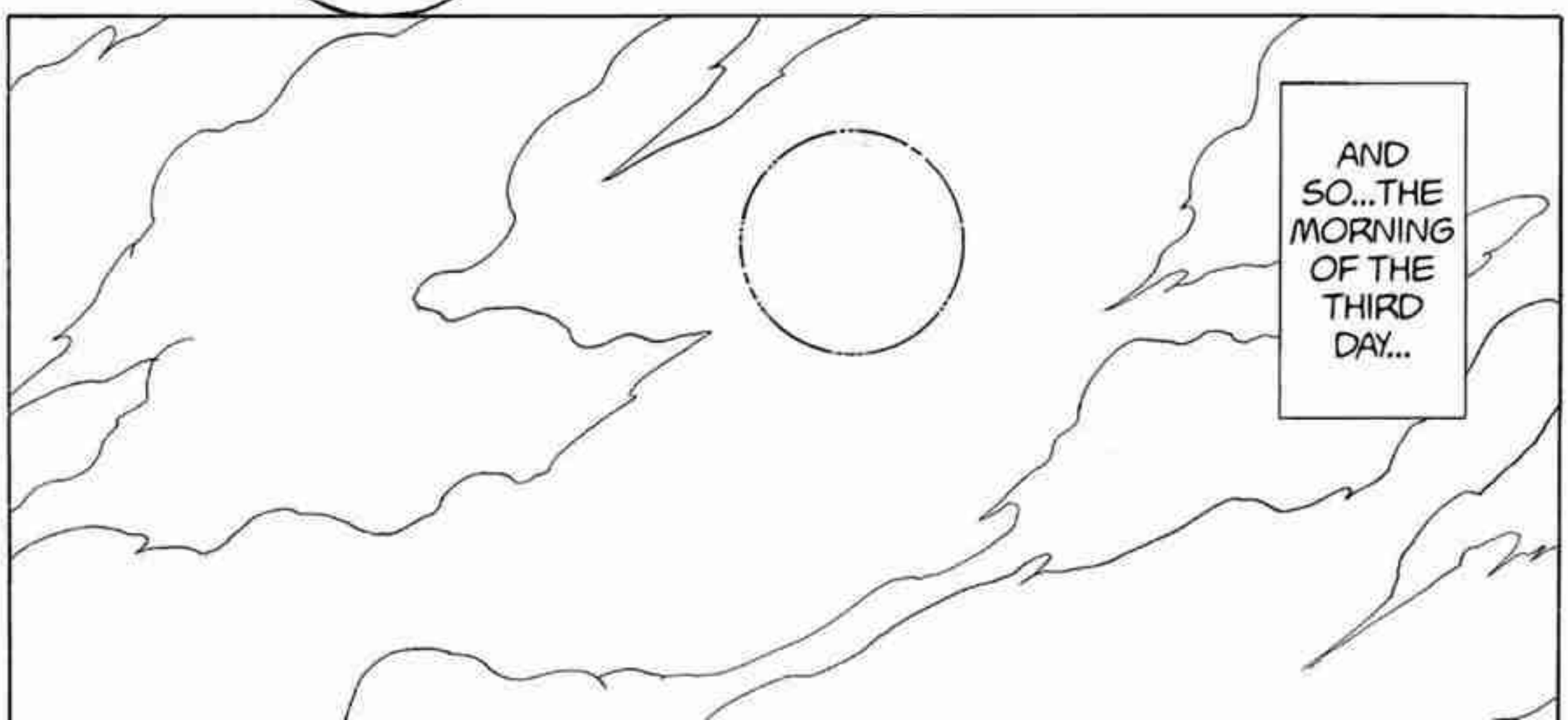
DO YOU THINK IT'LL GO SO EASILY...?
I'VE GOT YOU...

MAKE NO MISTAKE, SHE WILL SWALLOW OUR TERMS.

YOU CAN COUNT ON IT...

I KNOW HER BETTER THAN SHE KNOWS HERSELF...!

I ALSO KNOW HER GREATEST WEAKNESS.



HAH!
ZWWRL
THUDDD
ZWOOOOSH

IN SHORT, WHILE YOU MAXIMIZE YOUR CHAKRA'S ROTATION AND POWER, YOU FORM AN ADDITIONAL MEMBRANE ON THE INSIDE OF THE BALLOON AND VISUALIZE COMPRESSING THE CHAKRA WITHIN.

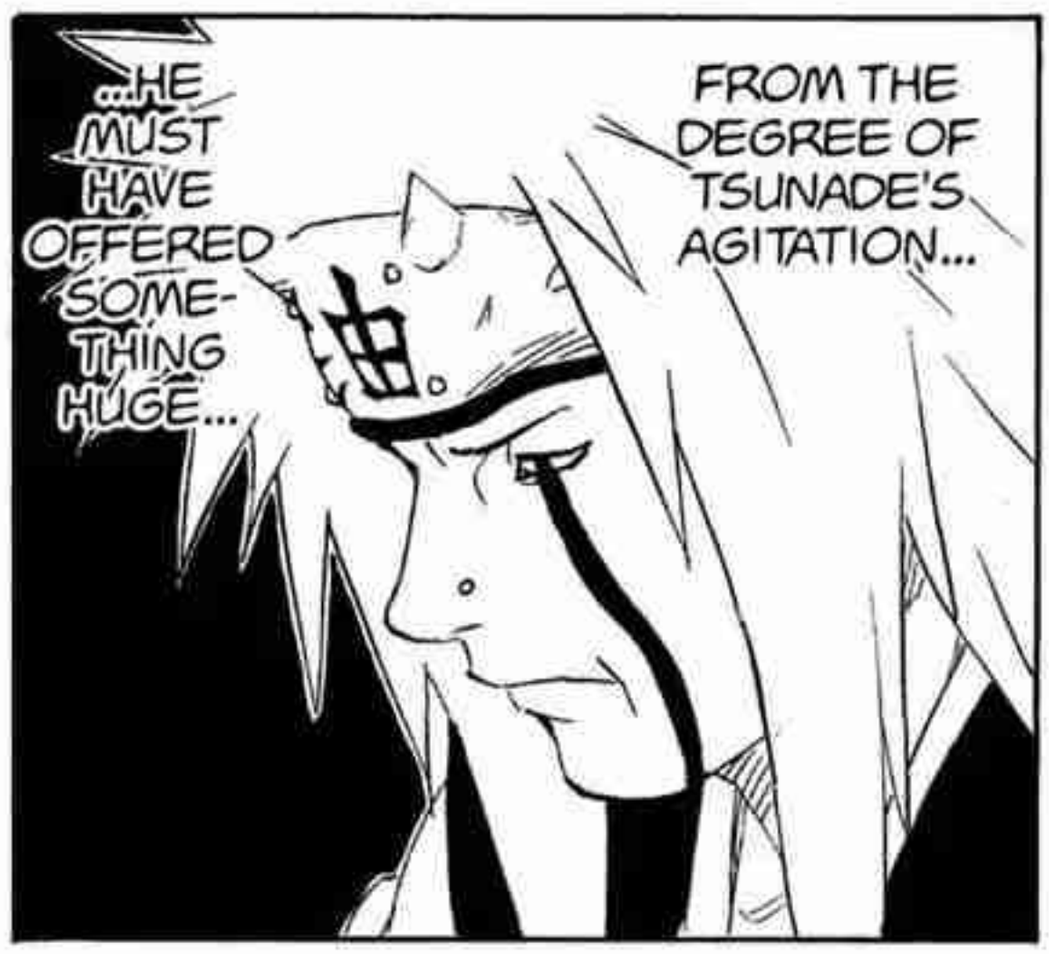
HUF HUF HUF HUF HUF

SO YOU SEE, IN THIS THIRD STATE, YOU PUT OUT EVERYTHING YOU'VE LEARNED SO FAR FULL FORCE, AND THEN... CONTAIN IT!

HUF HUF HUF HUF

I UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLE OF IT IN MY MIND...

...THAT'S PRETTY CRUEL. THAT'S HOW DREAMY-EYED BRATS GET STARTED ON THE WHOLE I'M GOING TO BECOME HOKAGE FARCE!
PLAYING MIGHTY MENTOR BY TEACHING HIM JUTSU HE HAS NO HOPE OF MASTERING?
URGH!
THUMP
CLATTER
CLATTER
ROOOOAR!!!
GRR
UNNH



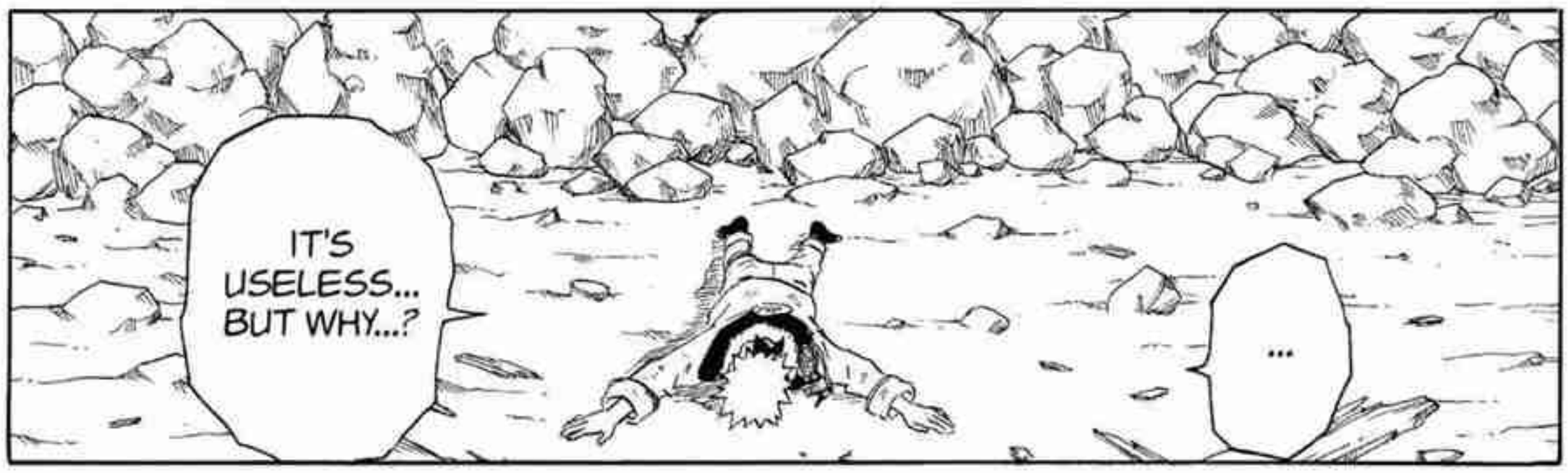
THE SIXTH NIGHT...

READ
THIS
WAY

PERHAPS I SHOULD LEAN ON TSUNADE ONE MORE TIME...

...

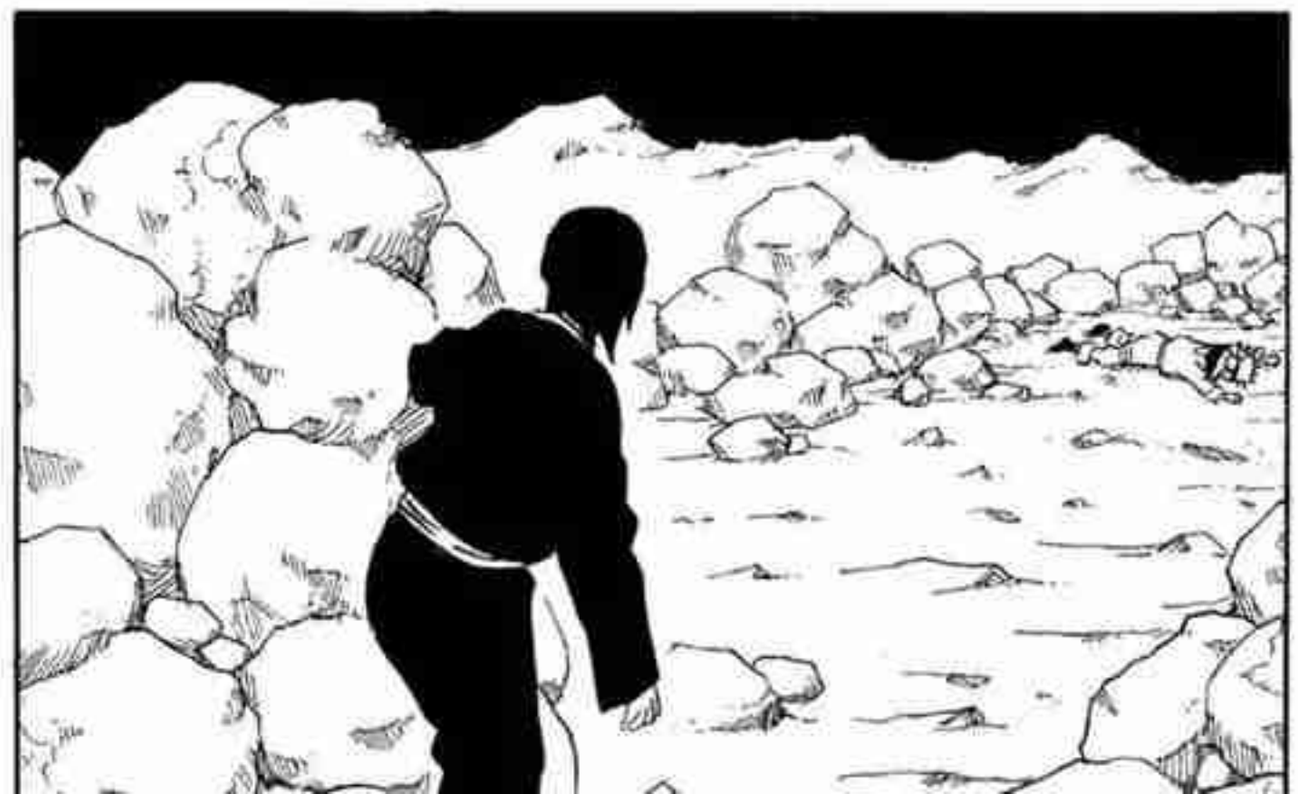
NARUTO'S BARELY BEEN BACK AT THE INN THIS WHOLE TIME.

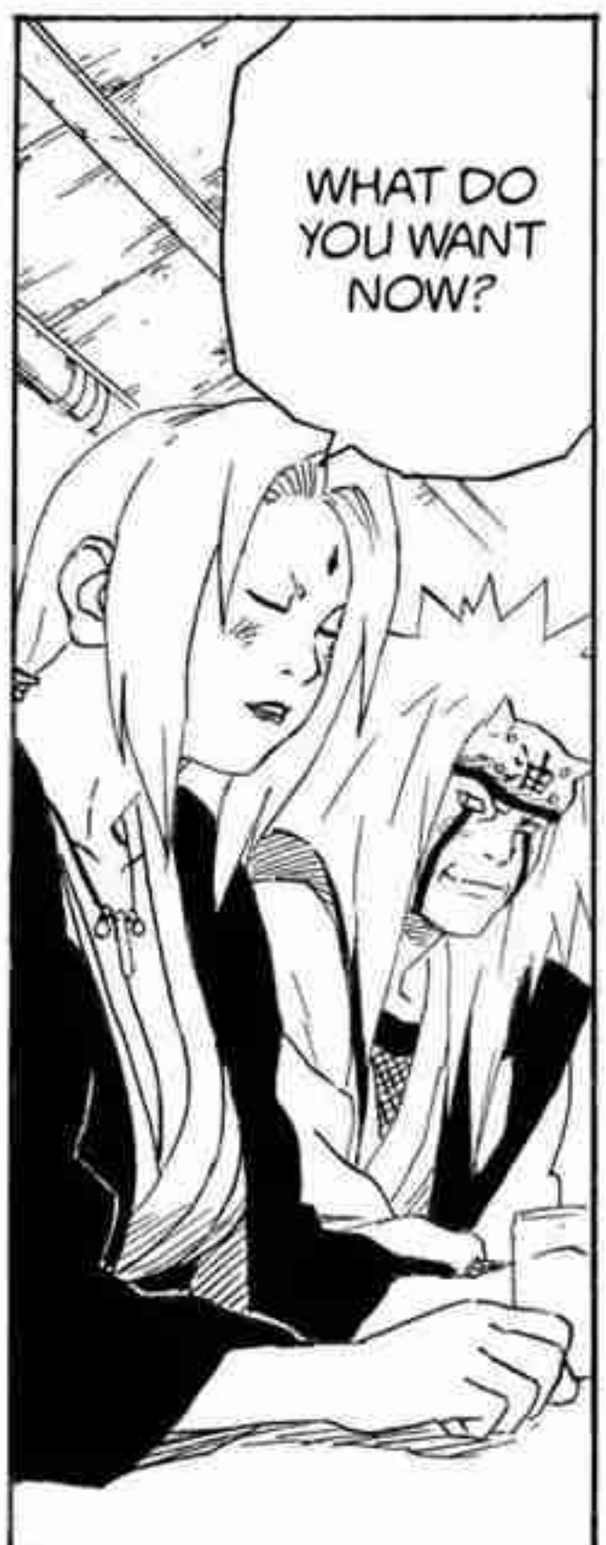

IT'S USELESS... BUT WHY...?
...

POP
!

AT THIS RATE, I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE IT...
I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME...

WH... WHAT THE...?!
!!

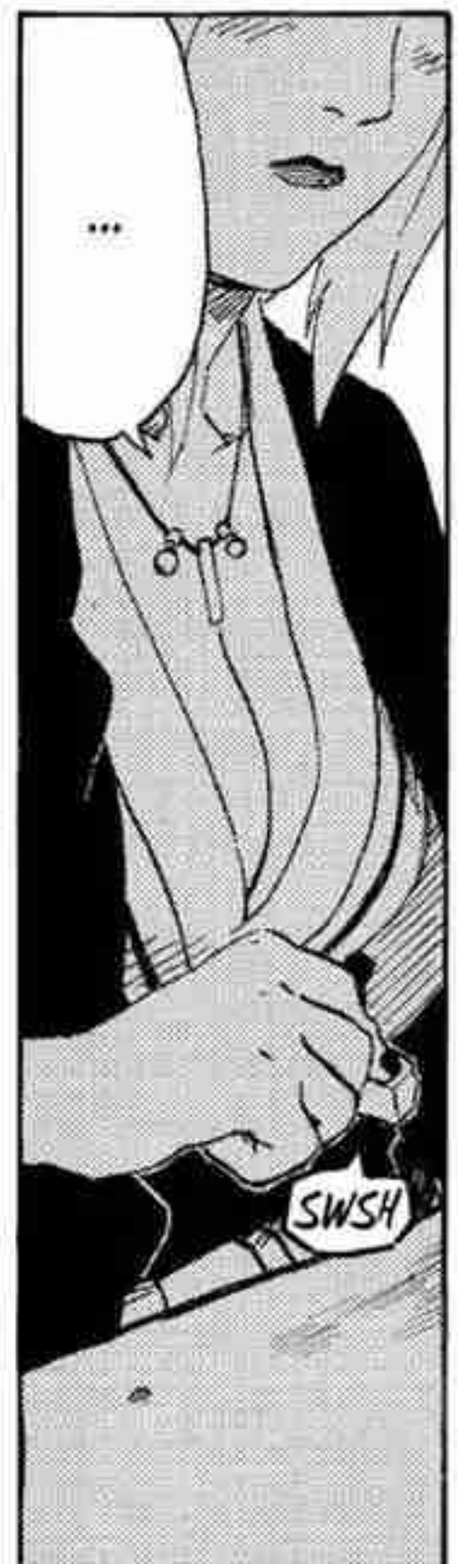



WHAT DO YOU WANT NOW?

おでんや

WH...WHAT HAPPENED, NARUTO?!!

SWIG
I WONDER HOW NARUTO'S BEEN FARING...?


...
SWSH

...TO-MORROW'S THE PROMISED SEVENTH DAY OF YOUR WAGER WITH NARUTO...

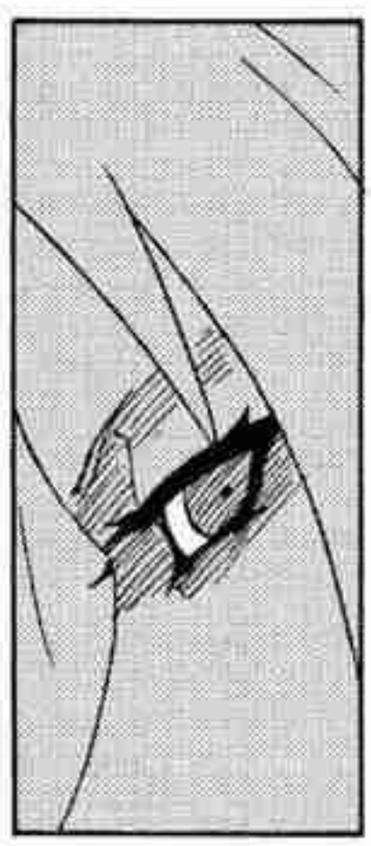
SKISH SKISH

WHISK

AAH! NICE, LOOKS DELICIOUS!
THE DAIKON RADISH'S READY!
TAP

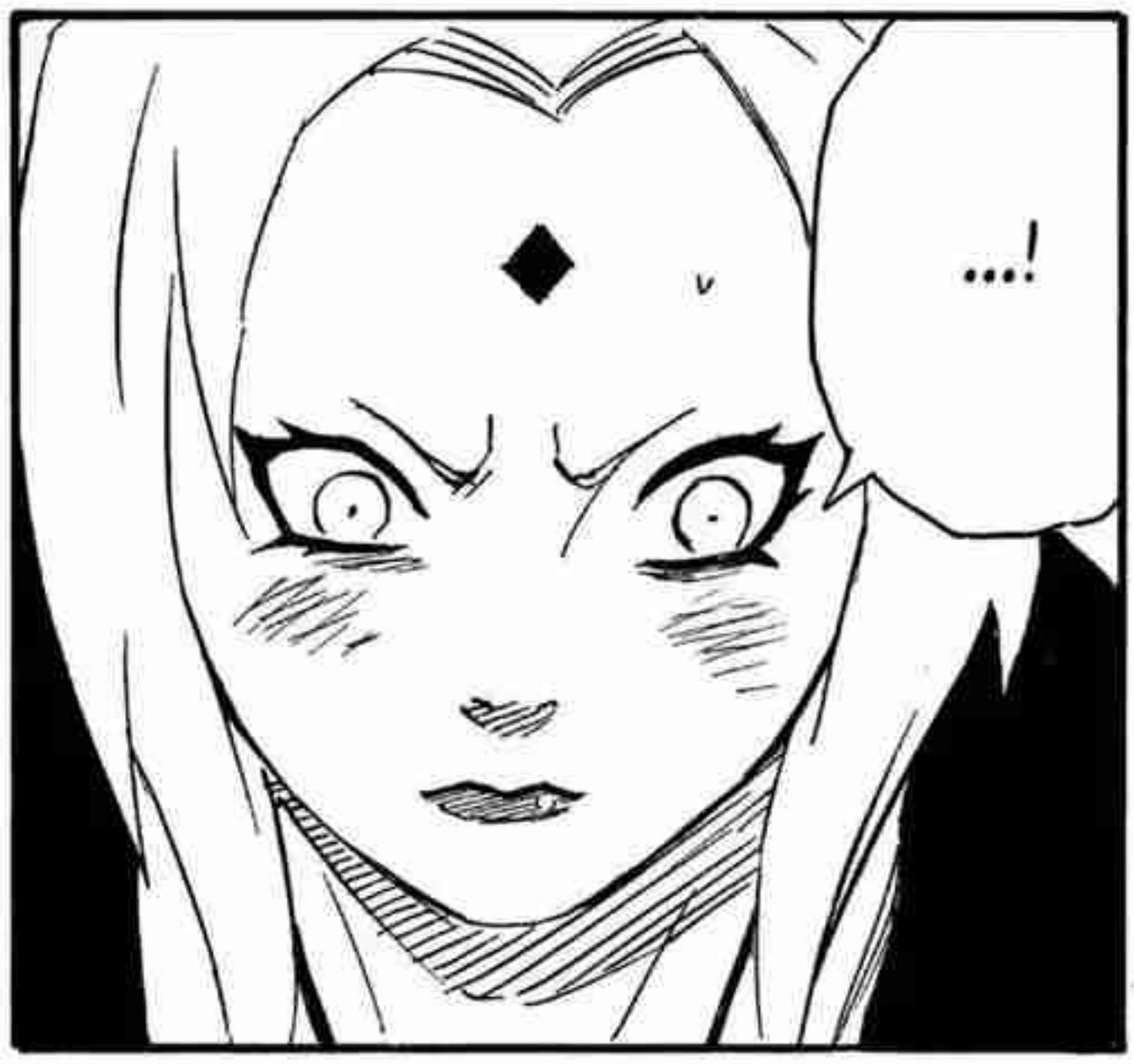
MMM!
油

SST

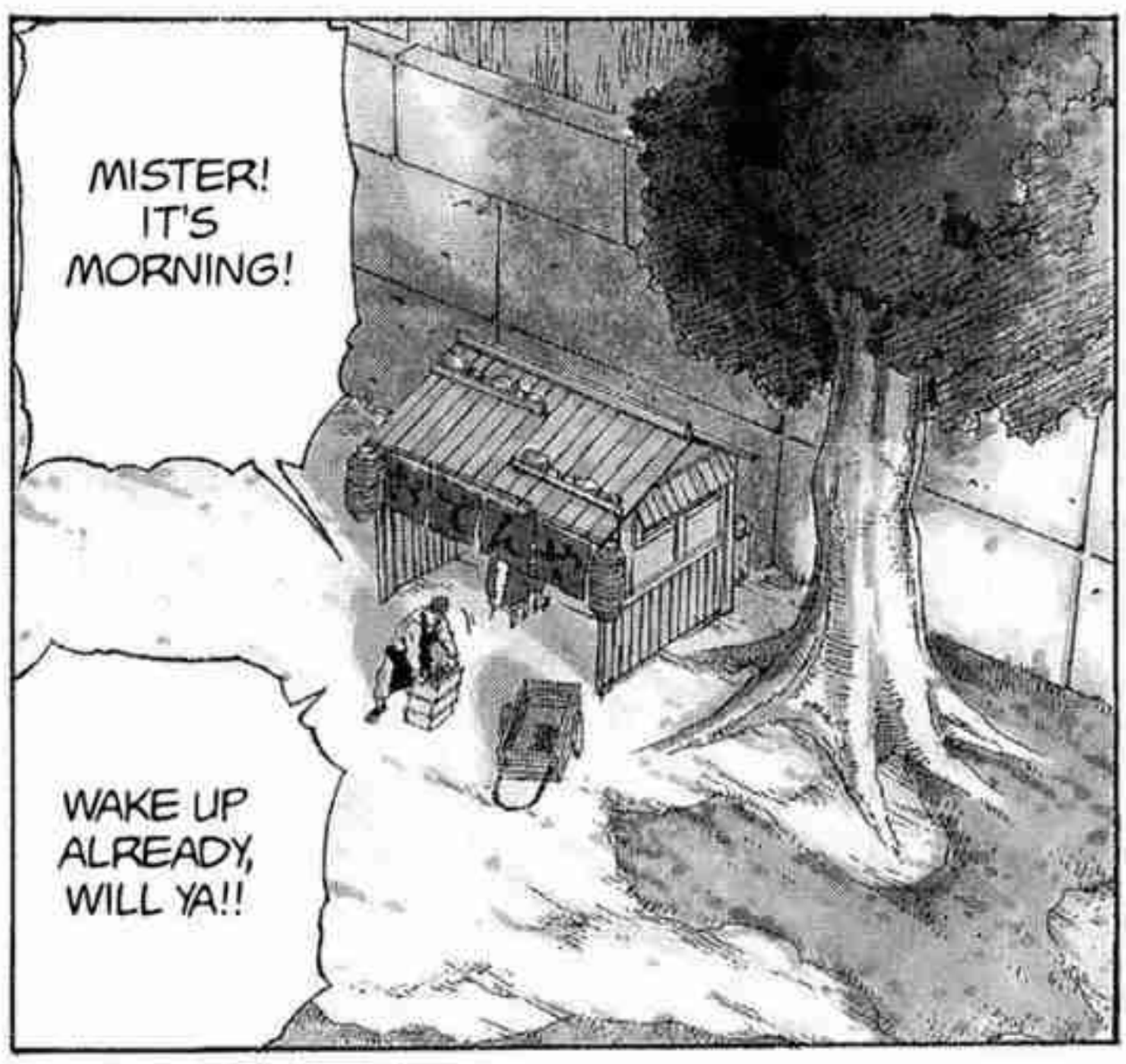


OH YEAH, OH YEAH!
MMM MMM

GULP

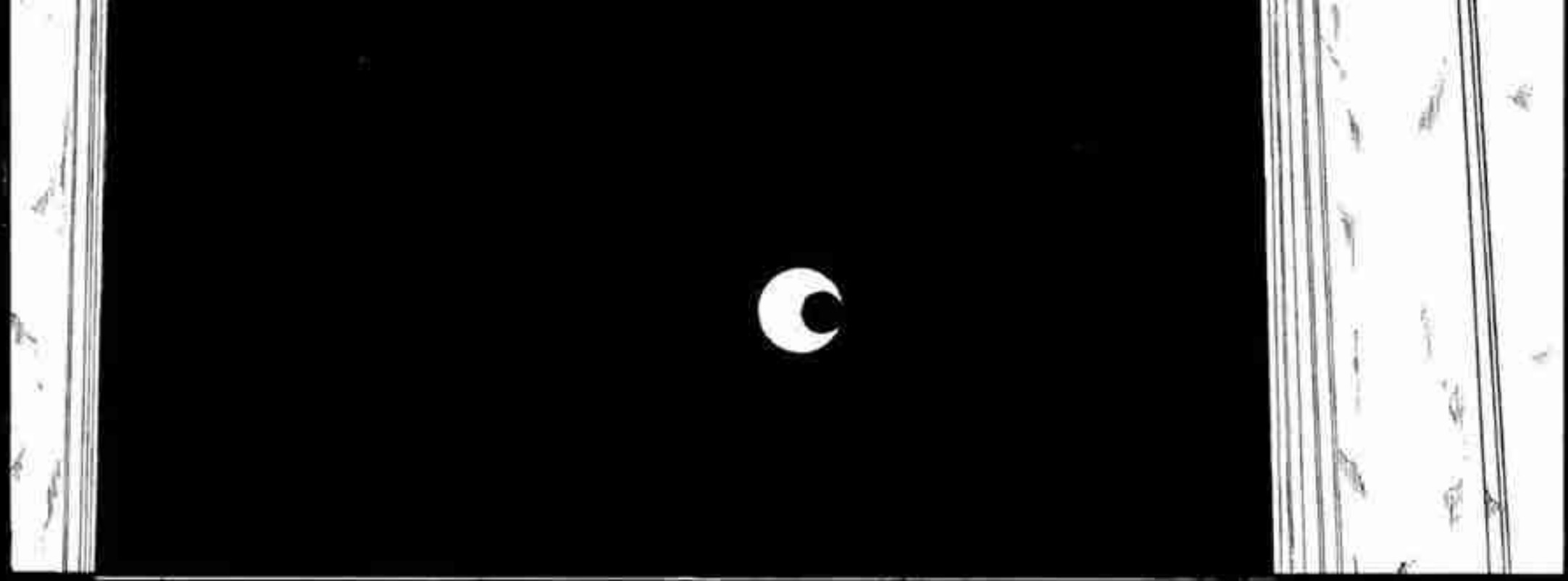


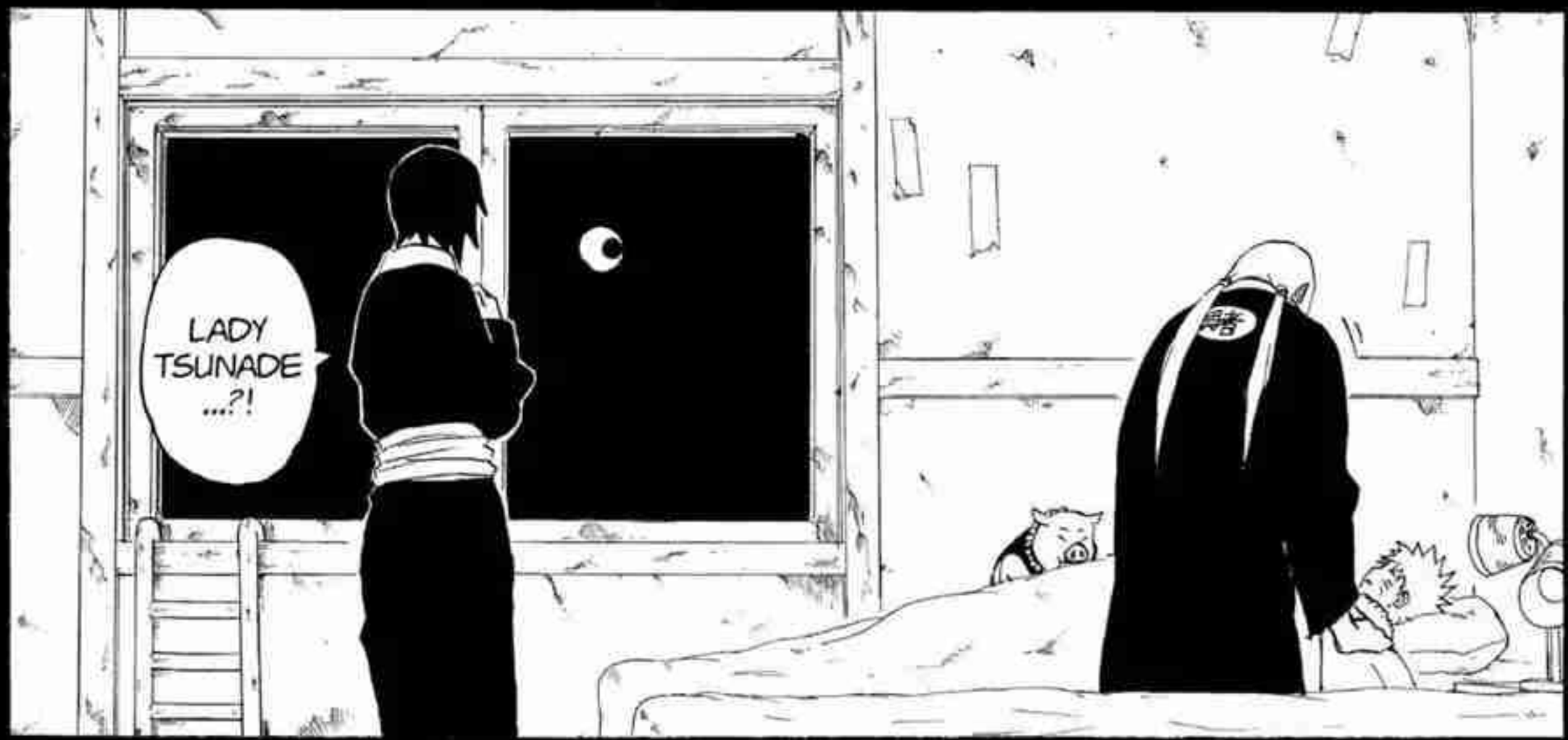
Number 162: A Vulnerable Heart...!!



Number 162: A Vulnerable Heart...!! zz

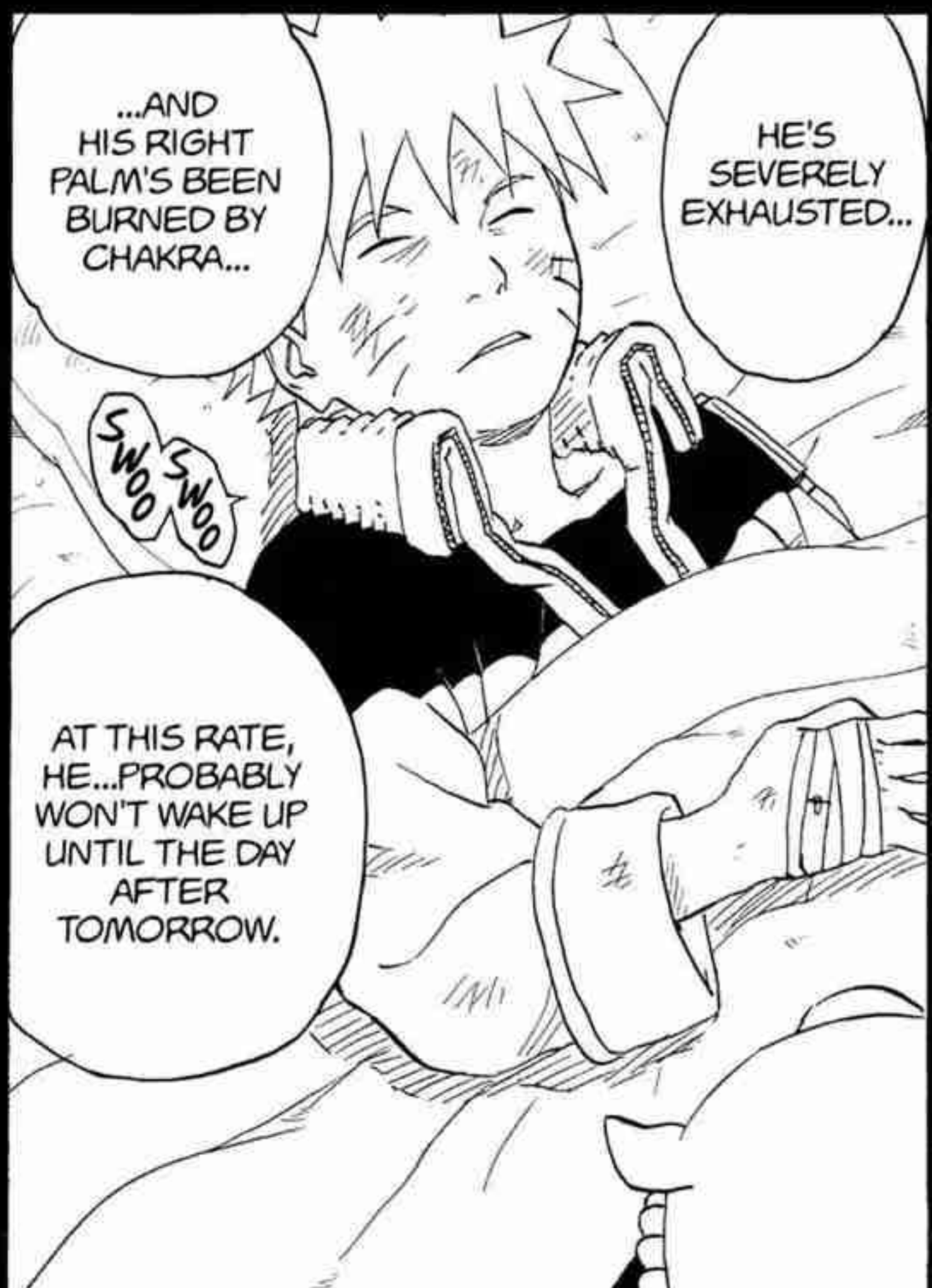
NARUTO
-ナルト-




LADY TSUNADE ...?!

I CAN'T BELIEVE I MADE SUCH A SILLY BET.
...IT'S JUST AS JIRAIYA SAID...

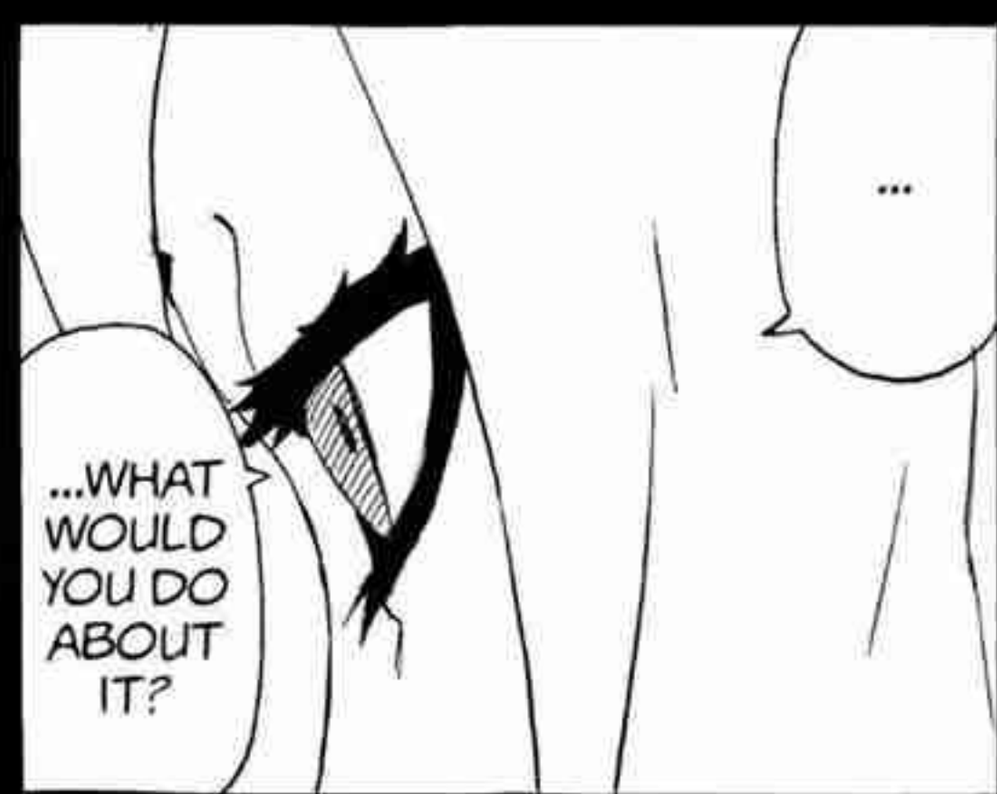
...
I WAS SUCH A FOOL.
HO HO...I SHOCKED MYSELF WITH MY OWN PASSIONATE REACTION...


...AND HIS RIGHT PALM'S BEEN BURNED BY CHAKRA...
HE'S SEVERELY EXHAUSTED...
SWOO SWOO
AT THIS RATE, HE...PROBABLY WON'T WAKE UP UNTIL THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.

PLEASE...
...
...
...DO NOT GO TOMORROW!
...LADY TSUNADE! DON'T BE SILENT! PLEASE SAY SOMETHING!
WHY?! WHY WON'T YOU SAY ANYTHING?!

...I WOULD STOP YOU!
EVEN IN EXCHANGE FOR MY LIFE...

IF...YOU INSIST ON GOING...

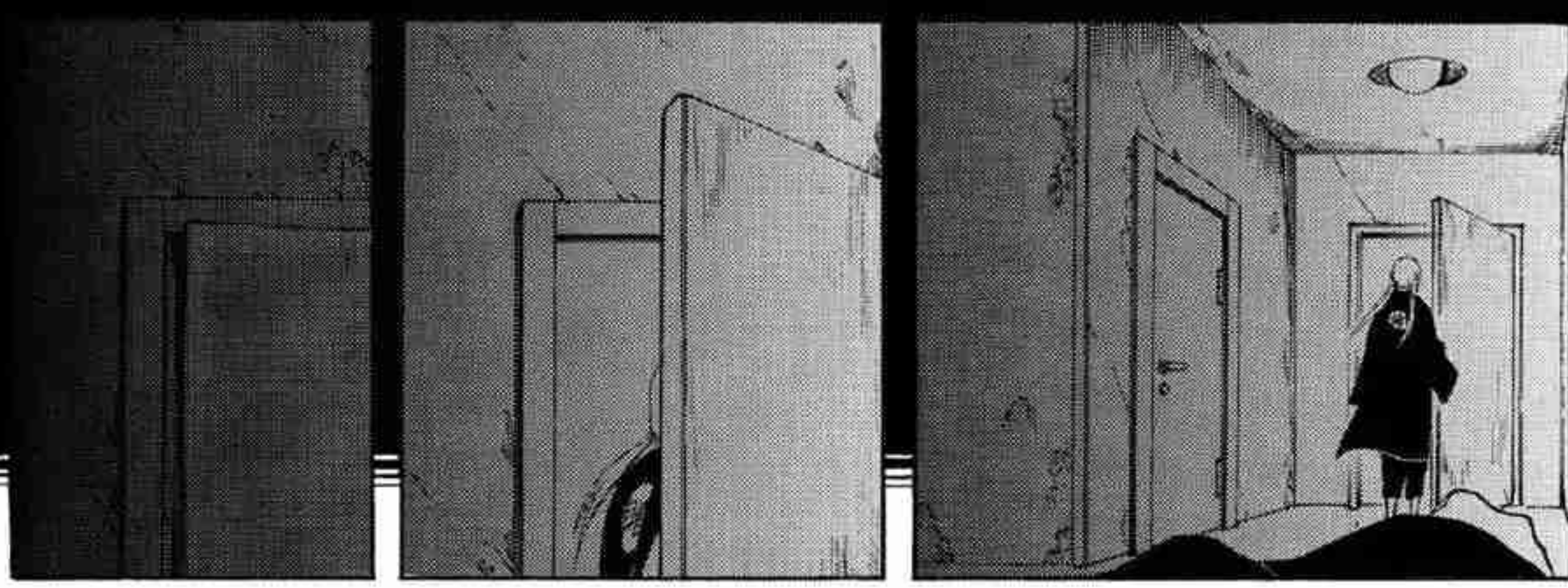

...WHAT WOULD YOU DO ABOUT IT?
...

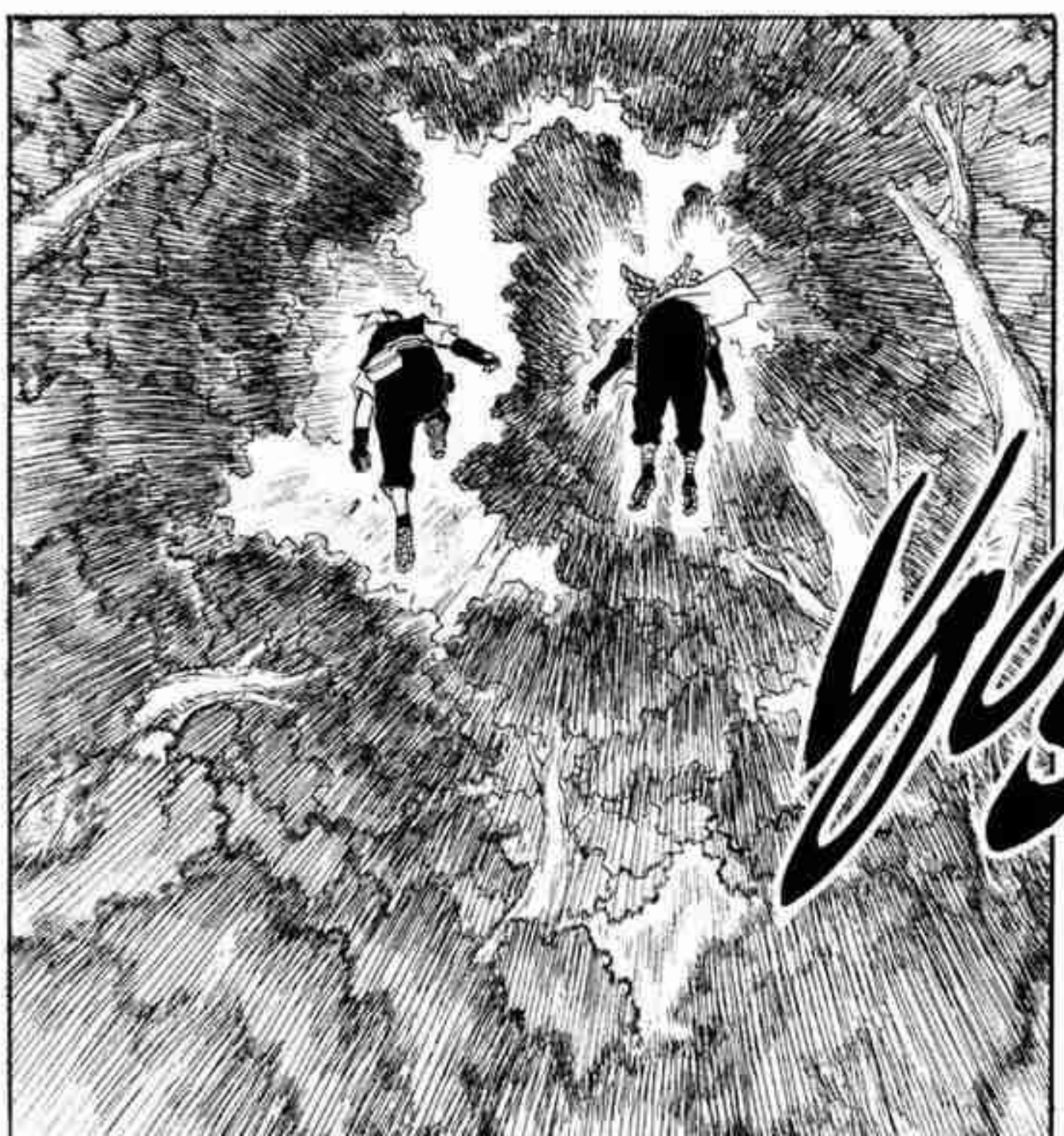
DON'T YOU DARE USE THAT TONE WITH ME...!
GRR
SHIZUNE...

HUH?
SKREE

SWEAT

KLOD

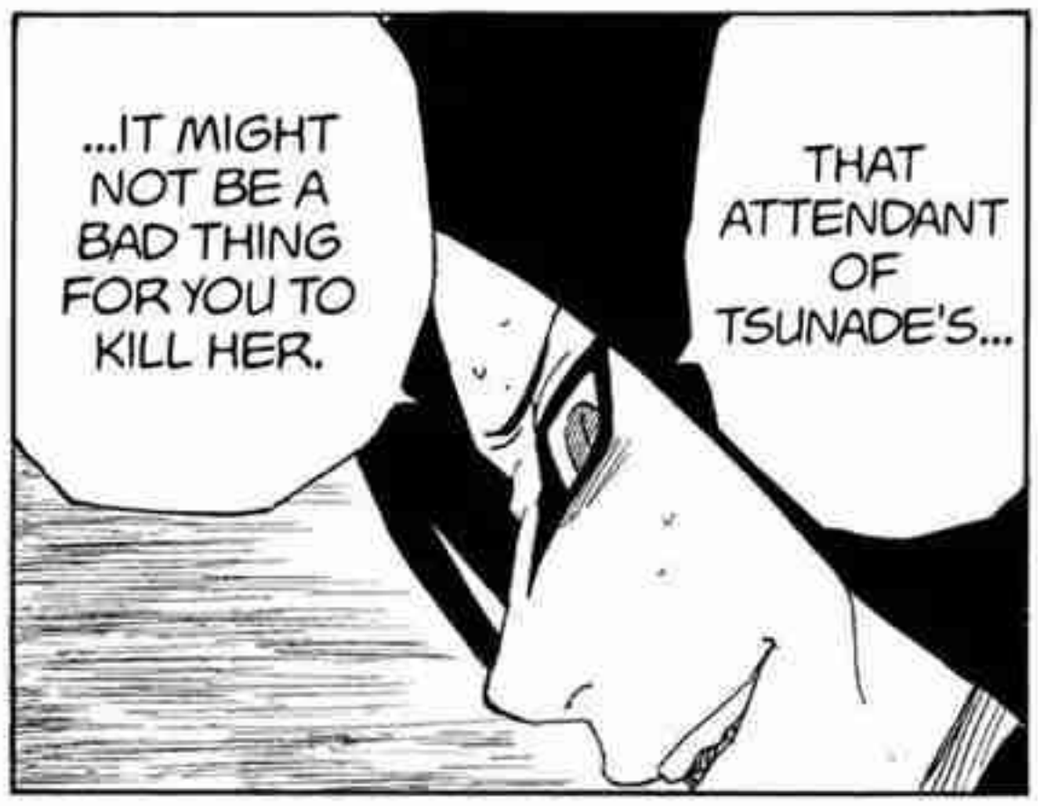



WOSH

READ
THIS
WAY

...WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?
...

IT WOULD BE MOST BOTHERSOME TO BE INTERRUPTED DURING OUR NEGOTIA-TIONS...
...!

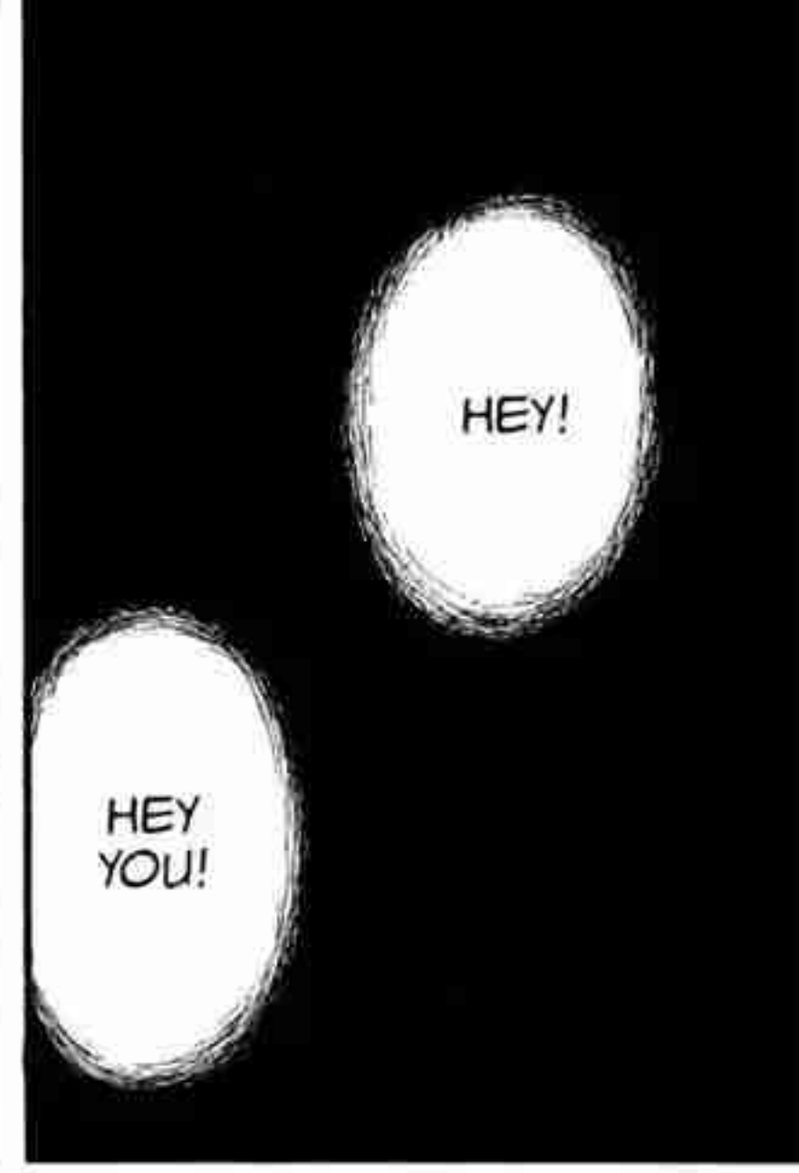

...IT MIGHT NOT BE A BAD THING FOR YOU TO KILL HER.
THAT ATTENDANT OF TSUNADE'S...

SWISH

ZWISH

SCREECH
WHAPP
SCREECH

...NARUTO...?


HEY!
HEY YOU!

UH...IT'S MONDAY...
WH... WHAT DAY IS TODAY?!
WHOA!
O... OH NO!!

AT THIS RATE, HE... PROBABLY WON'T WAKE UP UNTIL THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.
...

EVER SINCE I WAS A KID, I'VE BEEN ABLE TO RECOVER FROM PRACTICALLY ANY INJURY AFTER ONLY A SINGLE NIGHT'S SLEEP!!

...

YOU FEEL OKAY?
WHAT?!
SWSH

THAT'S RIGHT... WE'VE GOT NO TIME TO LOSE!

TODAY'S THE PROMISED DAY!
WHERE'S THAT ANNOYING OLD LADY?!
BUT NEVER MIND ME...
I MAY NOT HAVE PERFECTED IT IN TRAINING YET, BUT THERE'S NOTHING LIKE GAME DAY PRESSURE...

THAT'S RIGHT... THIS BOY HOSTS THE NINE-TAILED...
CRACK
OWW...

DASH
NARUTO, YOU STAY HERE!!
!!

YOU'RE...!
POP
WHAT...?!

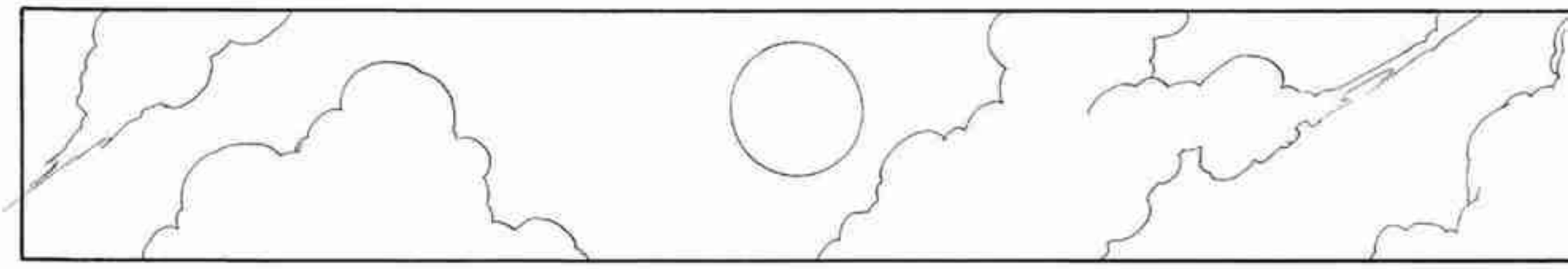
THKK
!

HUF

HUF

HUF

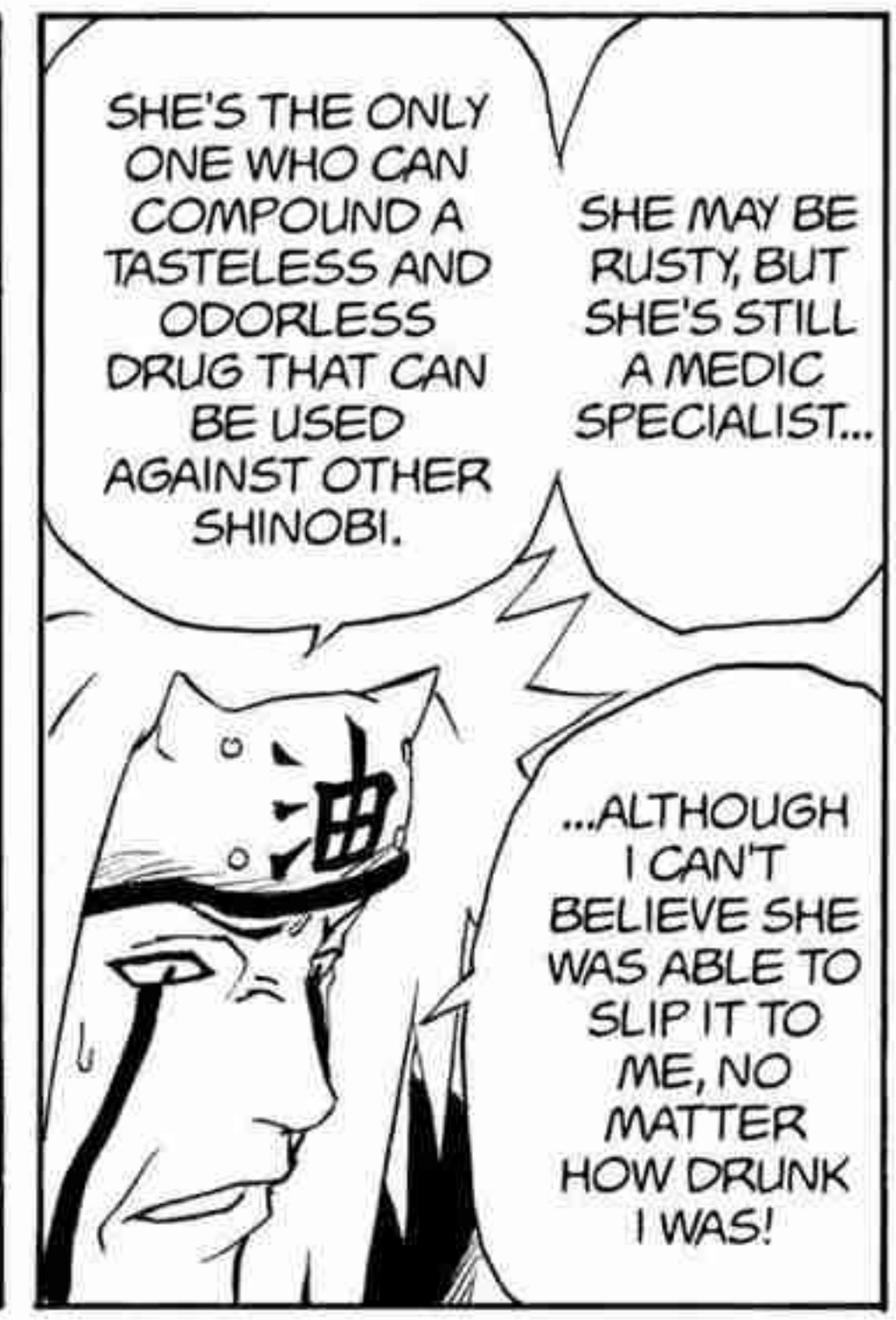
...HOLD UP, SHIZUNE...!



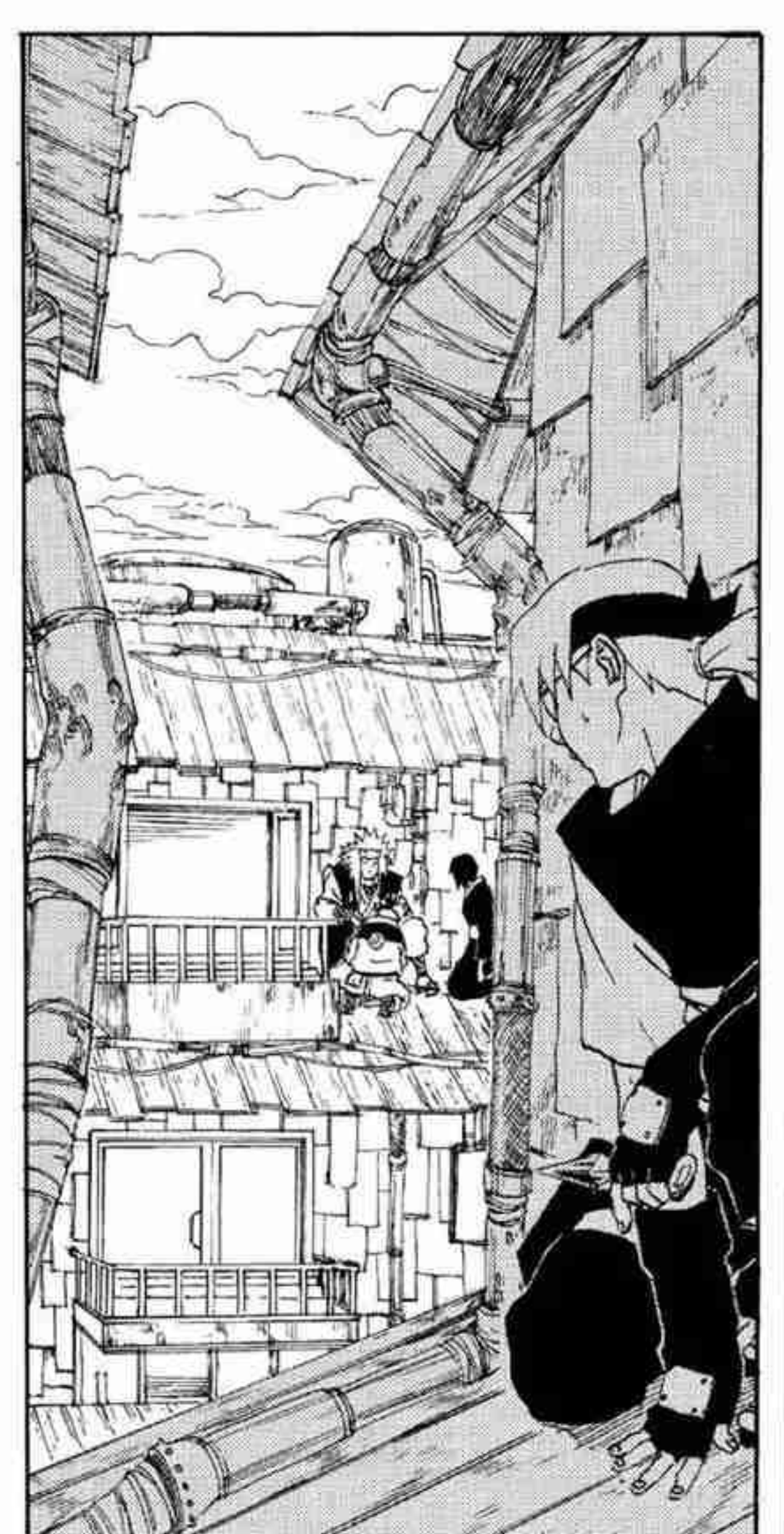
NOT ONLY CAN I NOT CALL UP MY CHAKRA PROPERLY, BUT MY BODY'S SO NUMB I CAN'T EVEN HOLD CHOPSTICKS RIGHT!

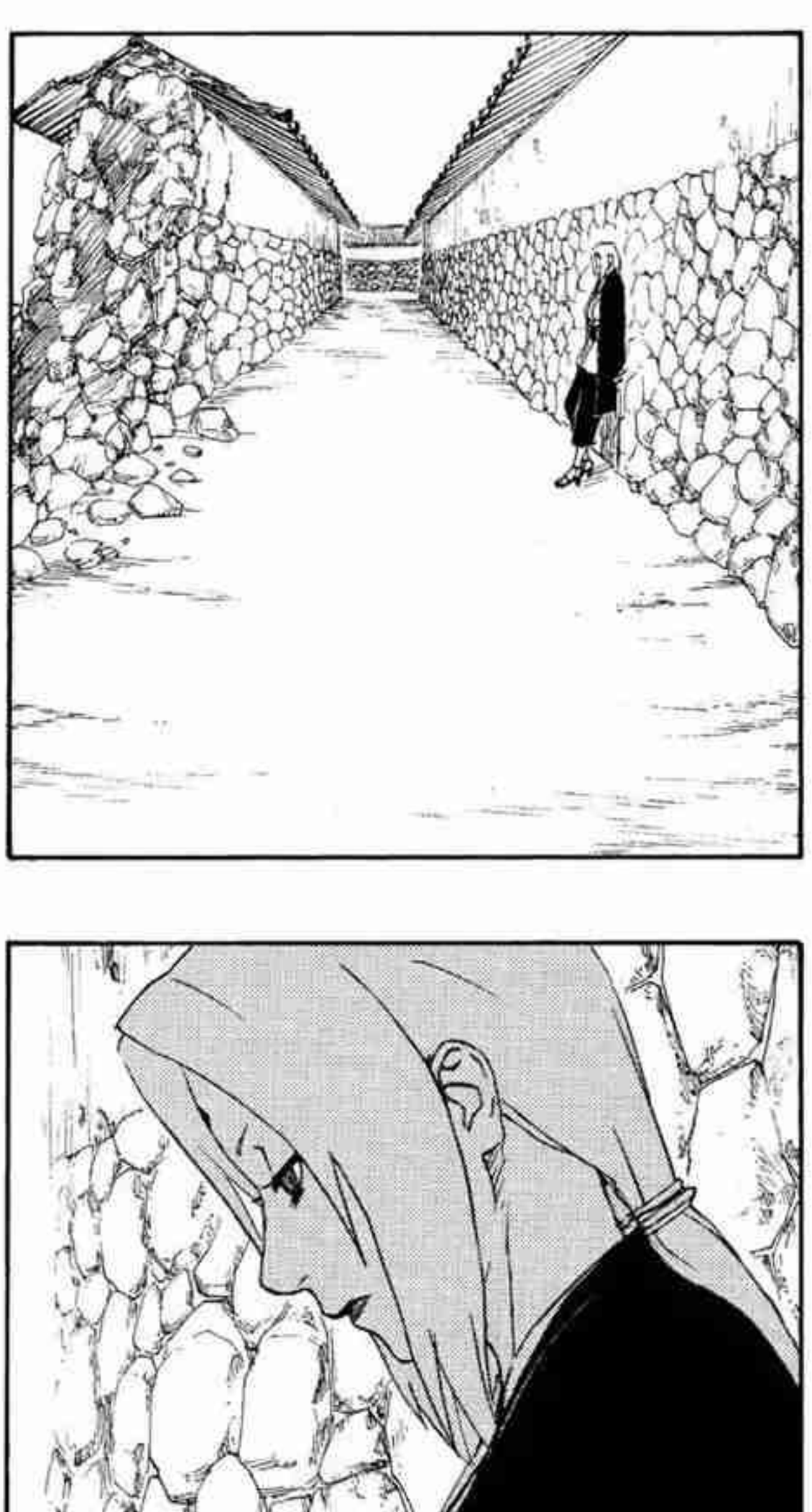
TSUNADE DRUGGED MY DRINK...!

...


SHE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN COMPOUND A TASTELESS AND ODORLESS DRUG THAT CAN BE USED AGAINST OTHER SHINOBI.
SHE MAY BE RUSTY, BUT SHE'S STILL A MEDIC SPECIALIST...
...ALTHOUGH I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE WAS ABLE TO SLIP IT TO ME, NO MATTER HOW DRUNK I WAS!

SO WRONG, MAN!!
YOU, WHO KEEPS BRAGGING ABOUT HOW GREAT A NINJA HE IS?!
SHUT UP!
DID YOU FALL FOR SOME PERVY ATTACK OR SOME-THING?!

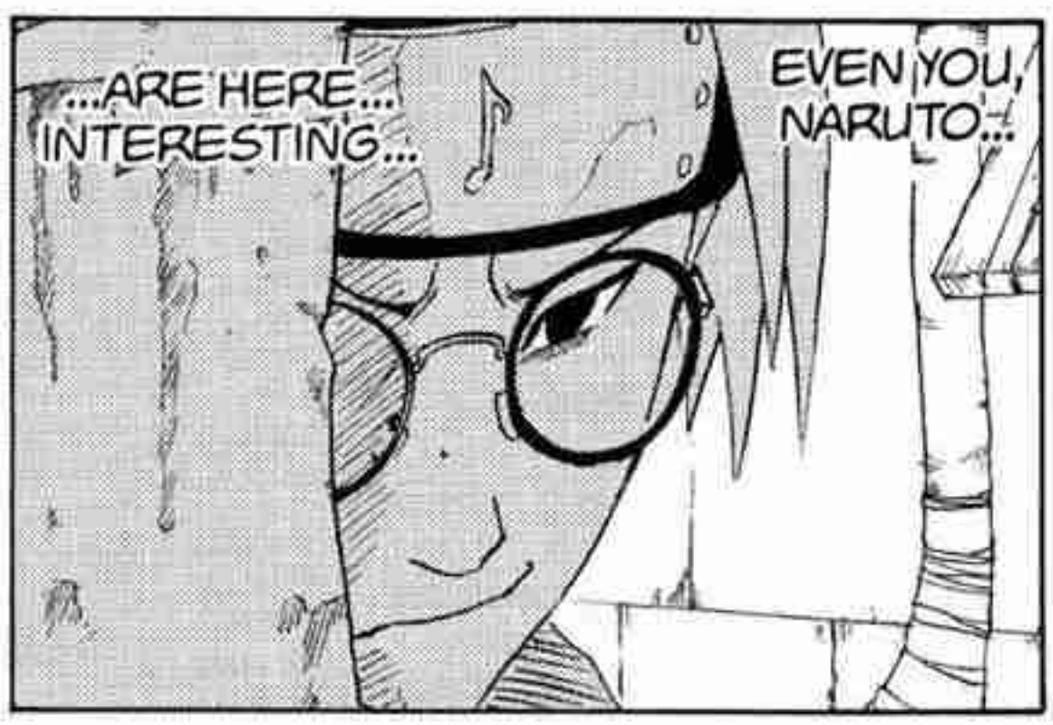


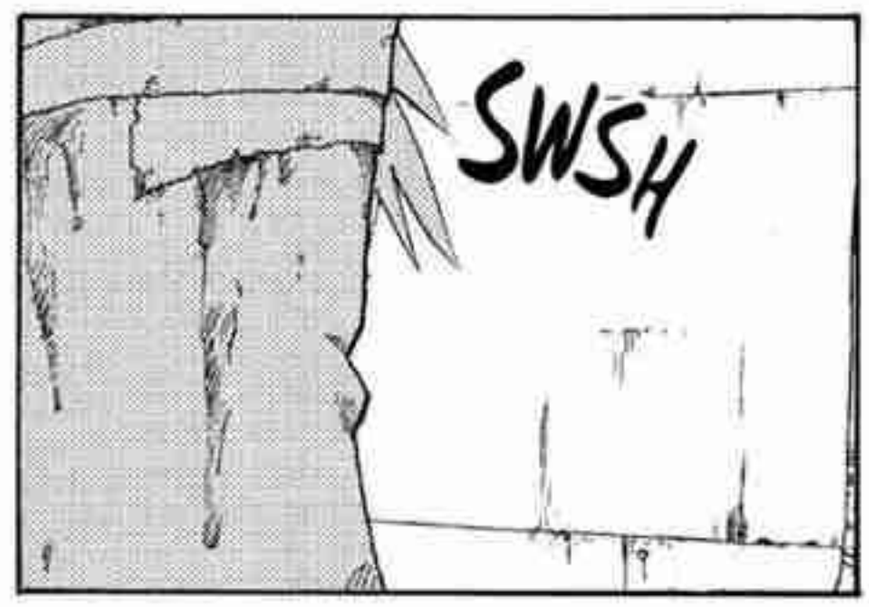


...NOW THIS IS REALLY GETTING TROUBLESOME...MY BEST COURSE IS WITHDRAW AND REPORT TO LORD OROCHIMARU...

...I WOULD NEVER HAVE GUESSED THAT LORD JIRAIYA HIMSELF WOULD SHOW UP HERE...

粉吹屋

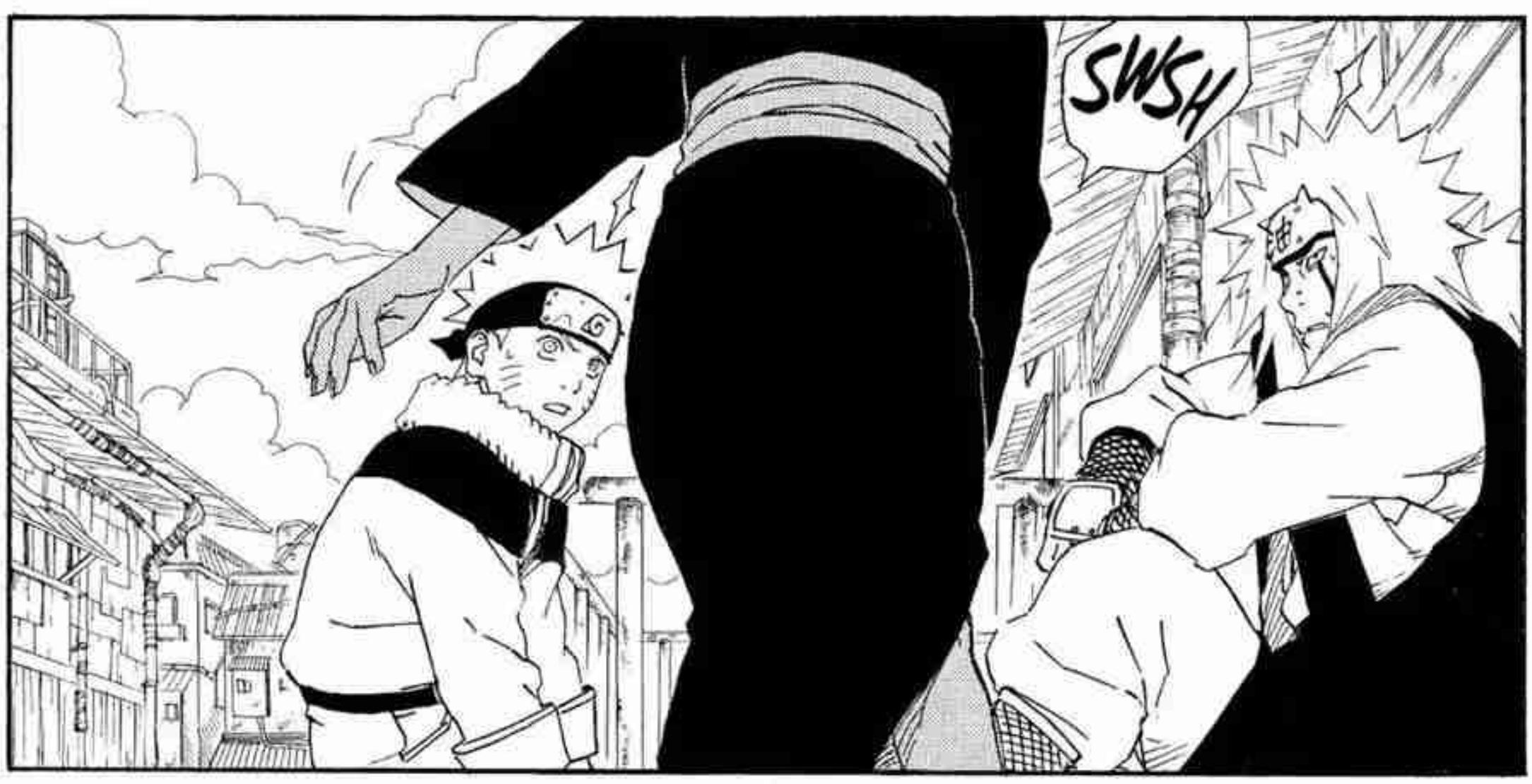




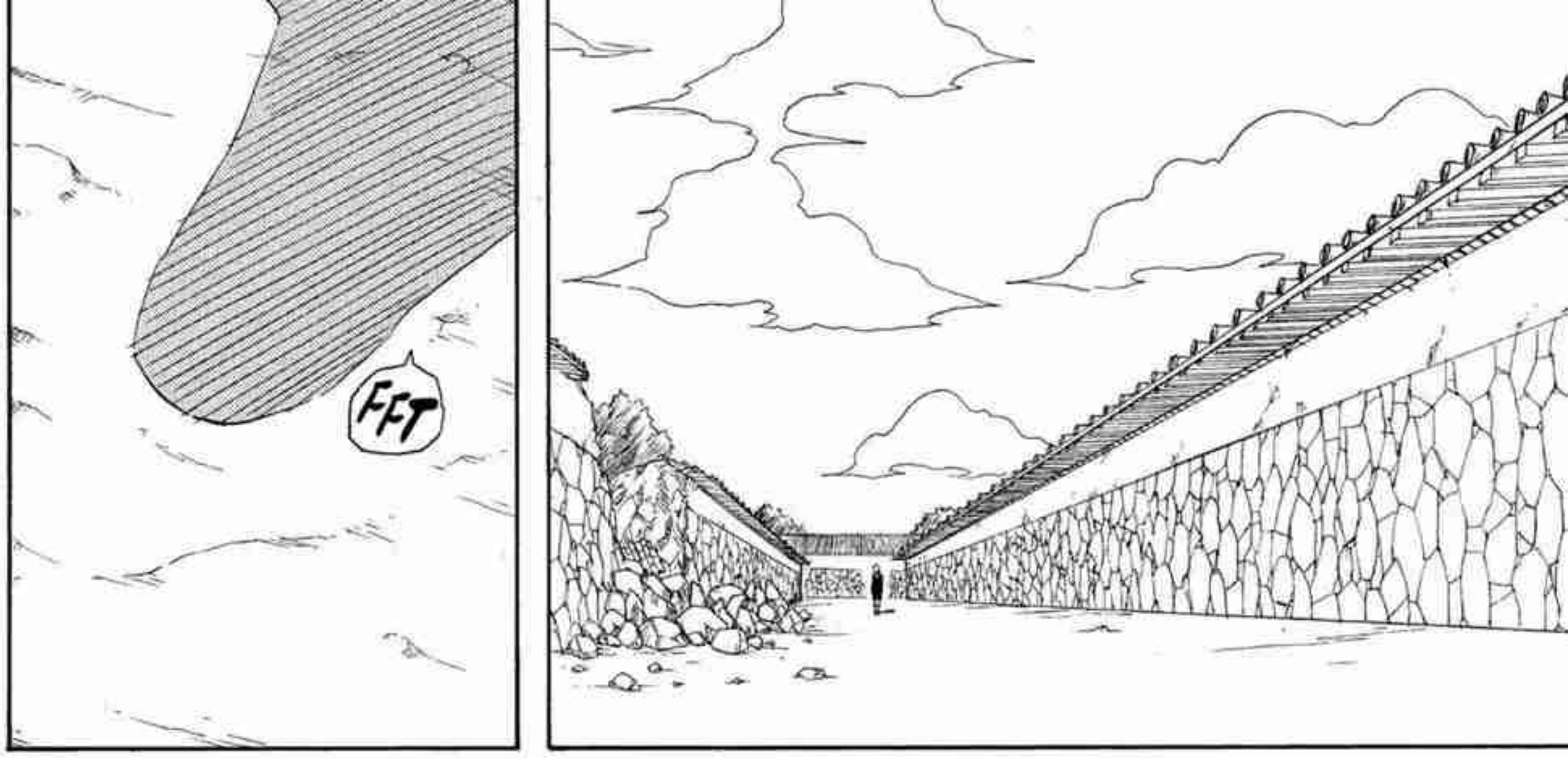
I WANTED TO TRUST LADY TSUNADE... THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T SPEAK UP SOONER.
...
BUT NOW...

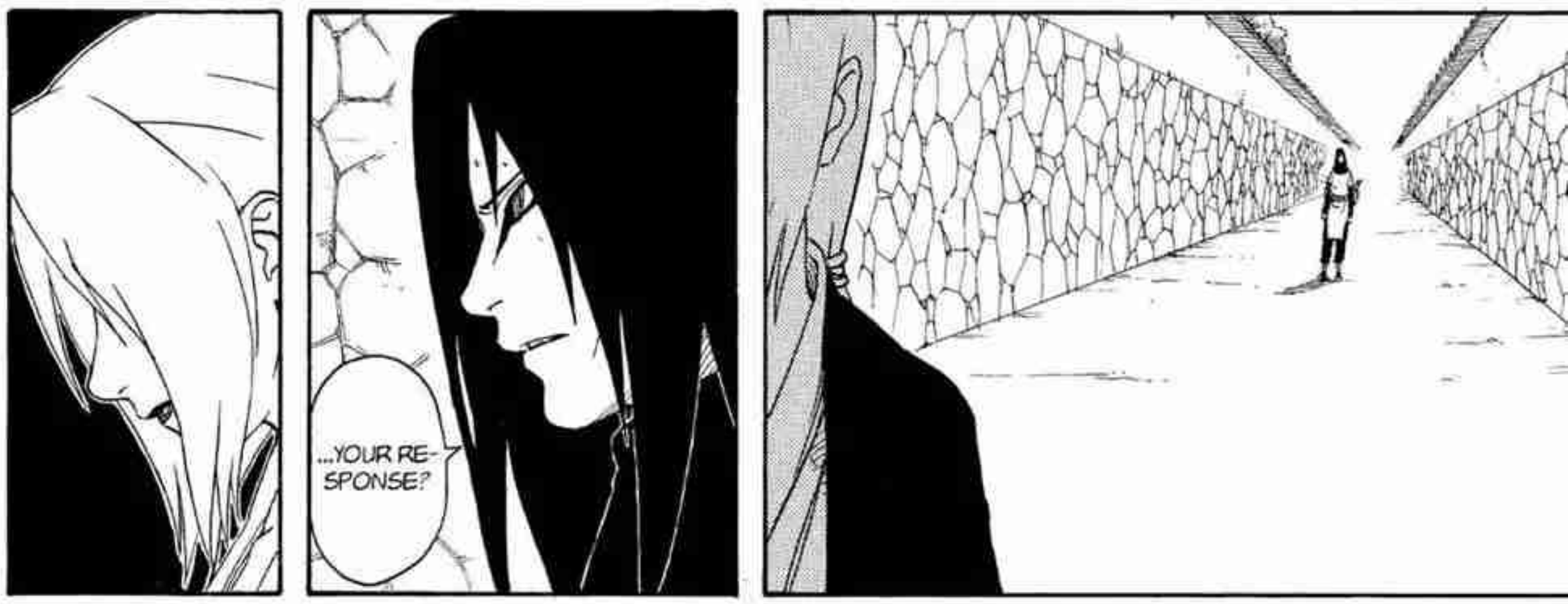
OROCHIMARU ?!

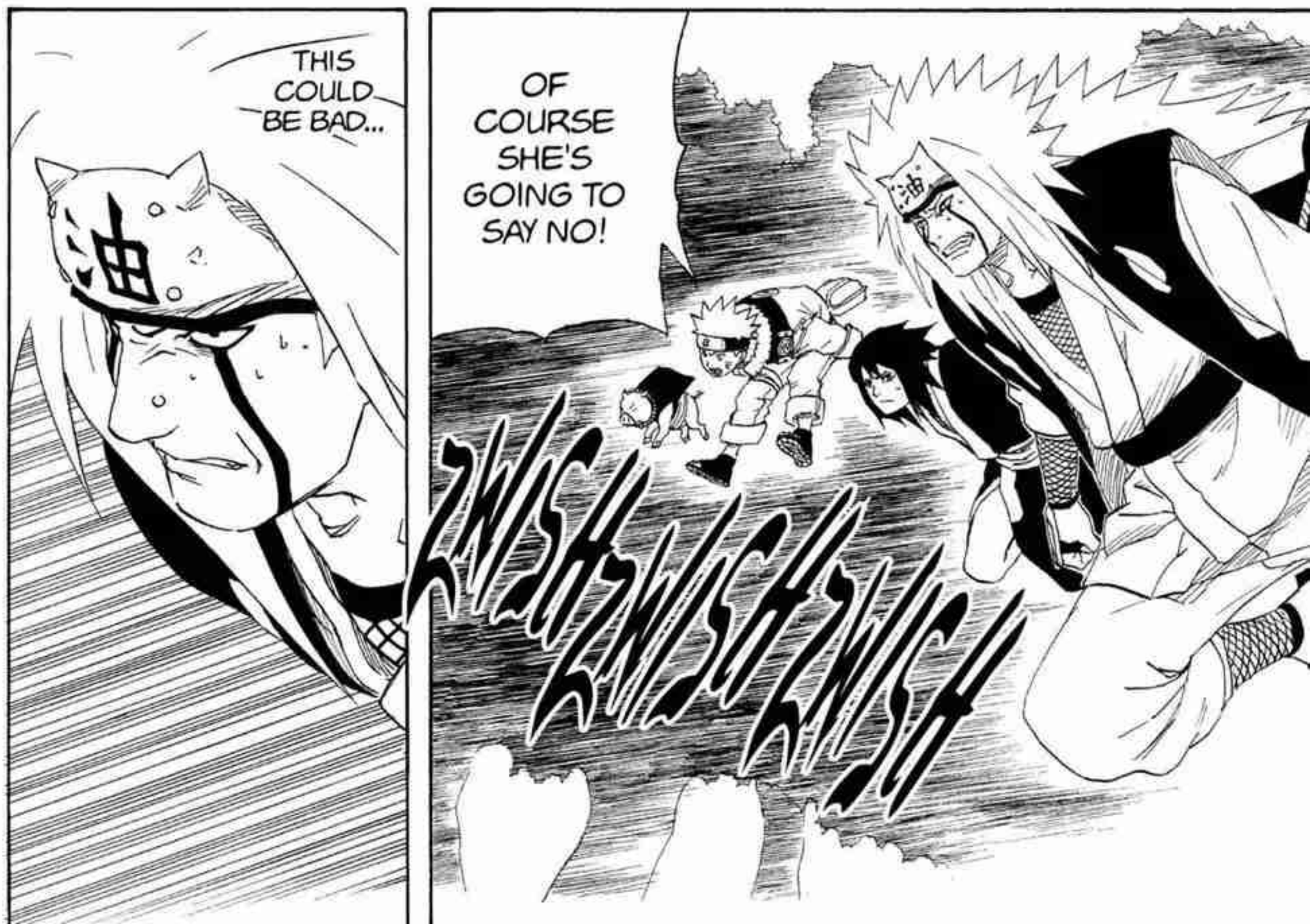
WHAT ALL YOU'VE BEEN CHATTING WITH OROCHIMARU ABOUT.
WHY DON'T YOU START SPILLING IT?


SWSH

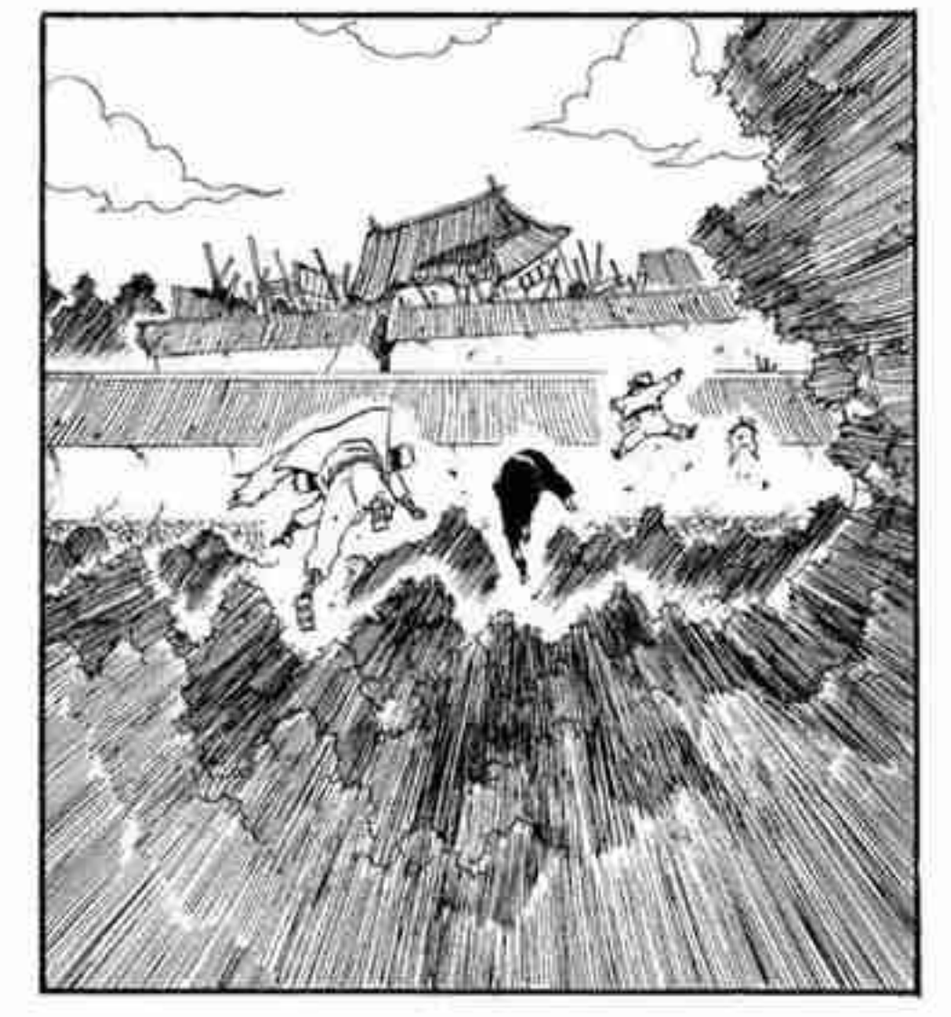
I'M COMING TOO!
SURE THING!
I'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING ON THE WAY!!
THERE'S VERY LITTLE TIME... PLEASE COME WITH ME!

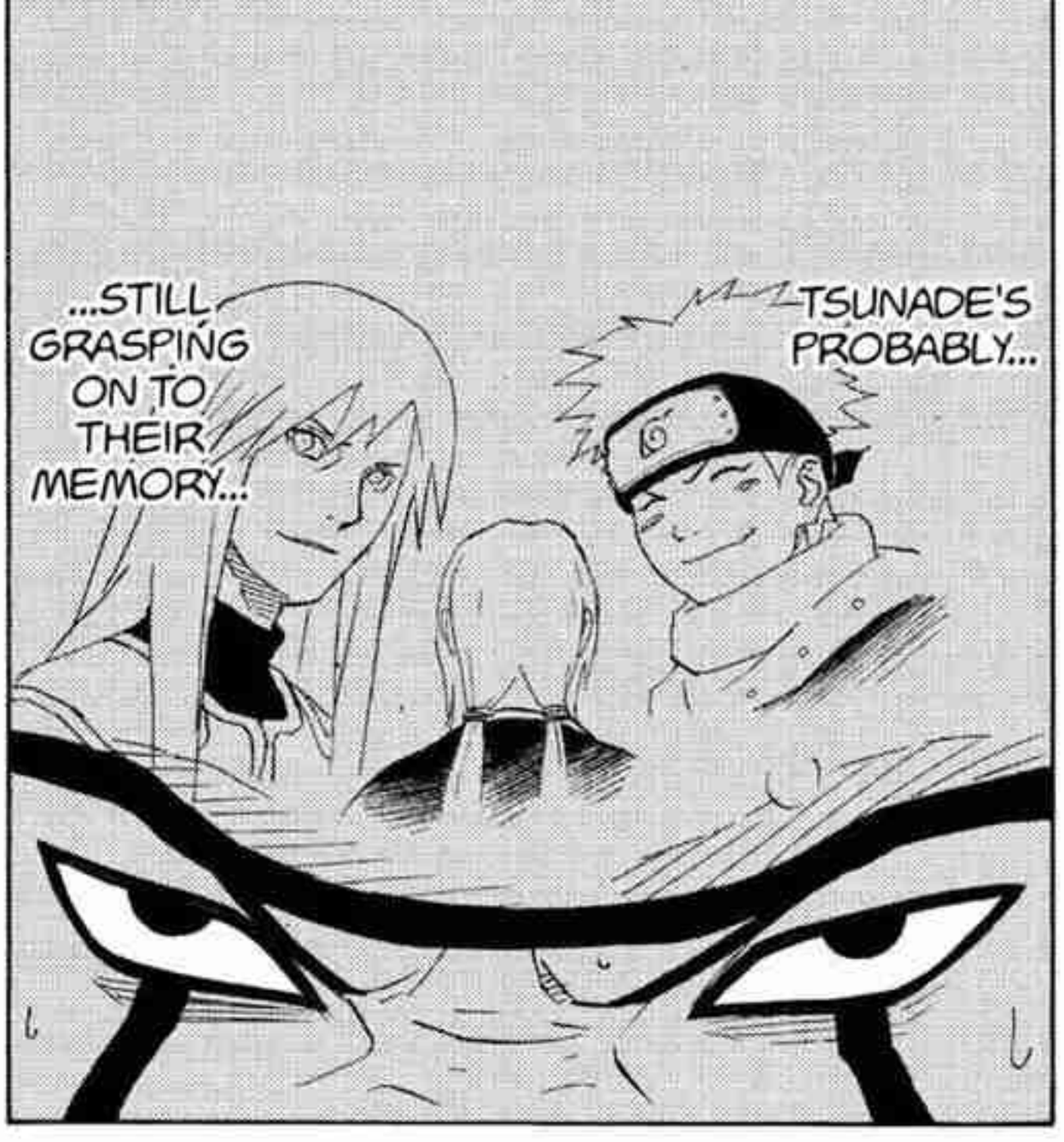

FFT


...YOUR RE-SPONSE?


THIS COULD BE BAD...
OF COURSE SHE'S GOING TO SAY NO!
KWASH KWASH KWASH

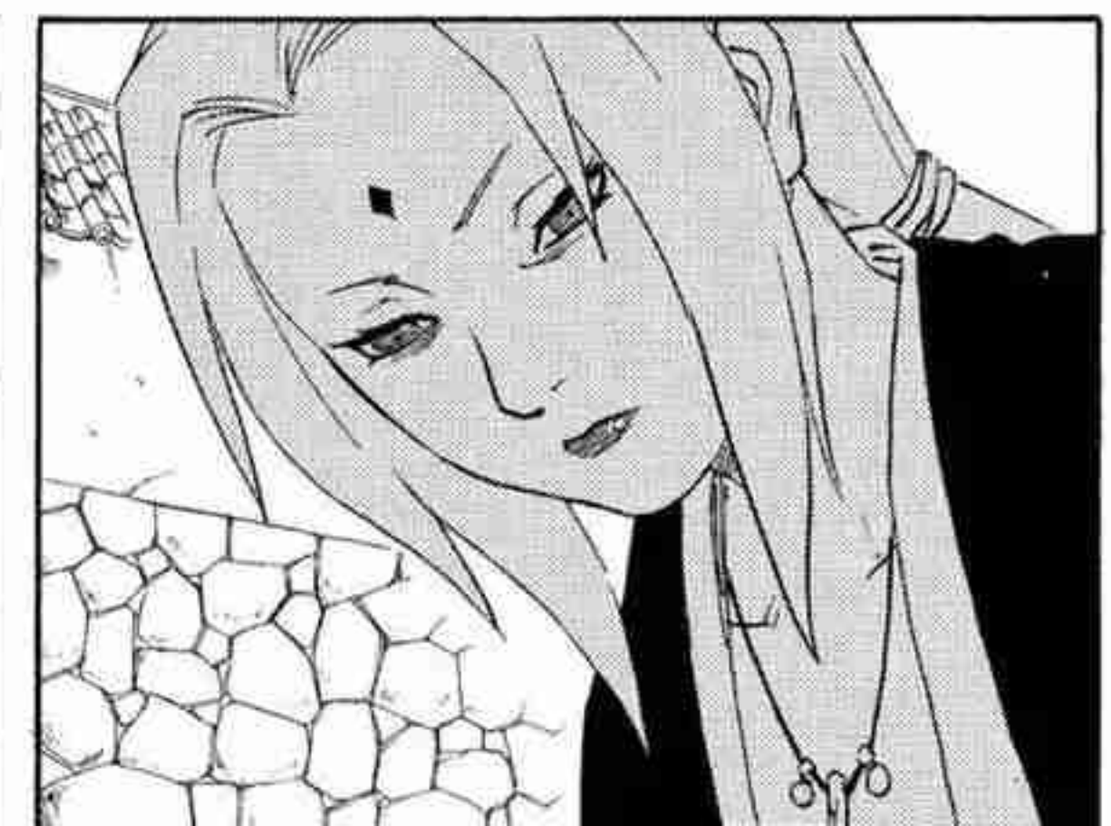
READ
THIS
WAY




...STILL GRASPING ON TO THEIR MEMORY...
TSUNADE'S PROBABLY...

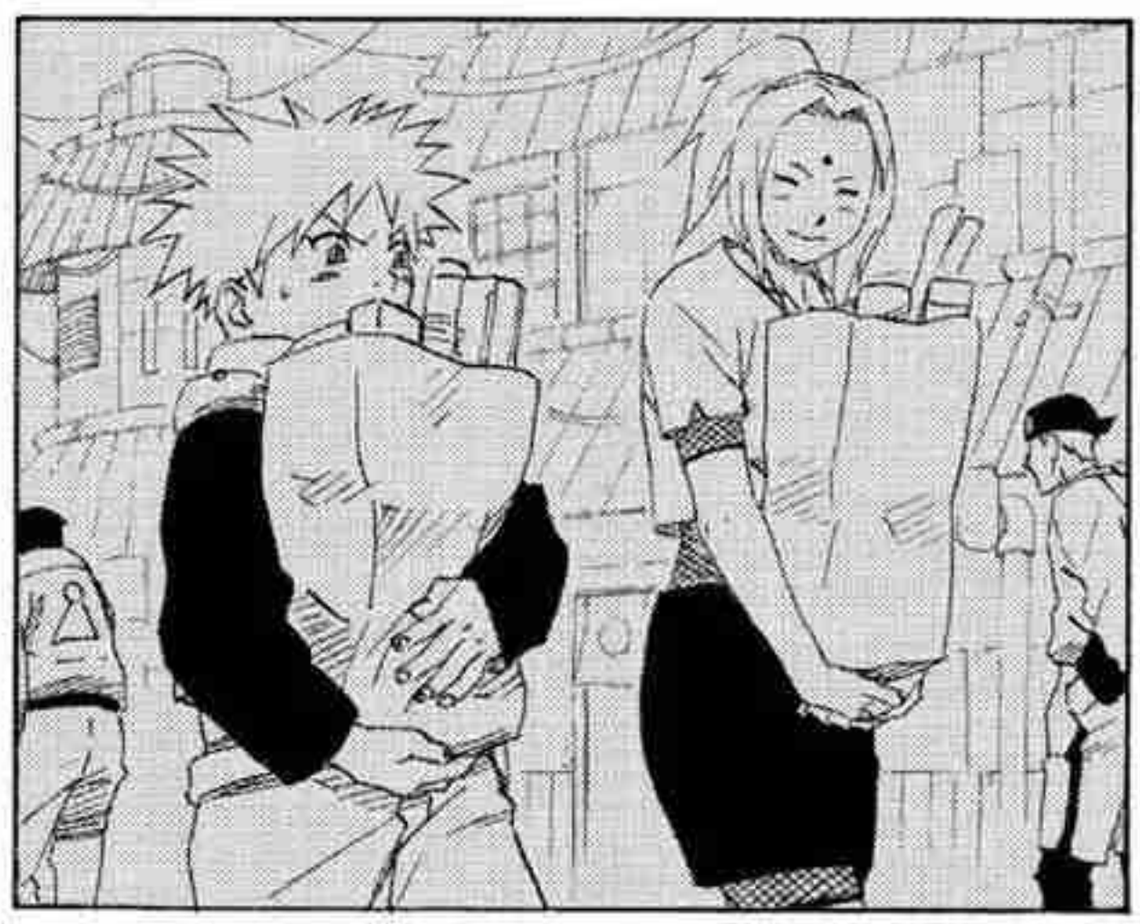
...I MIGHT HAVE TO KILL TSUNADE!
DEPENDING ON THE CIRCUM-STANCES...

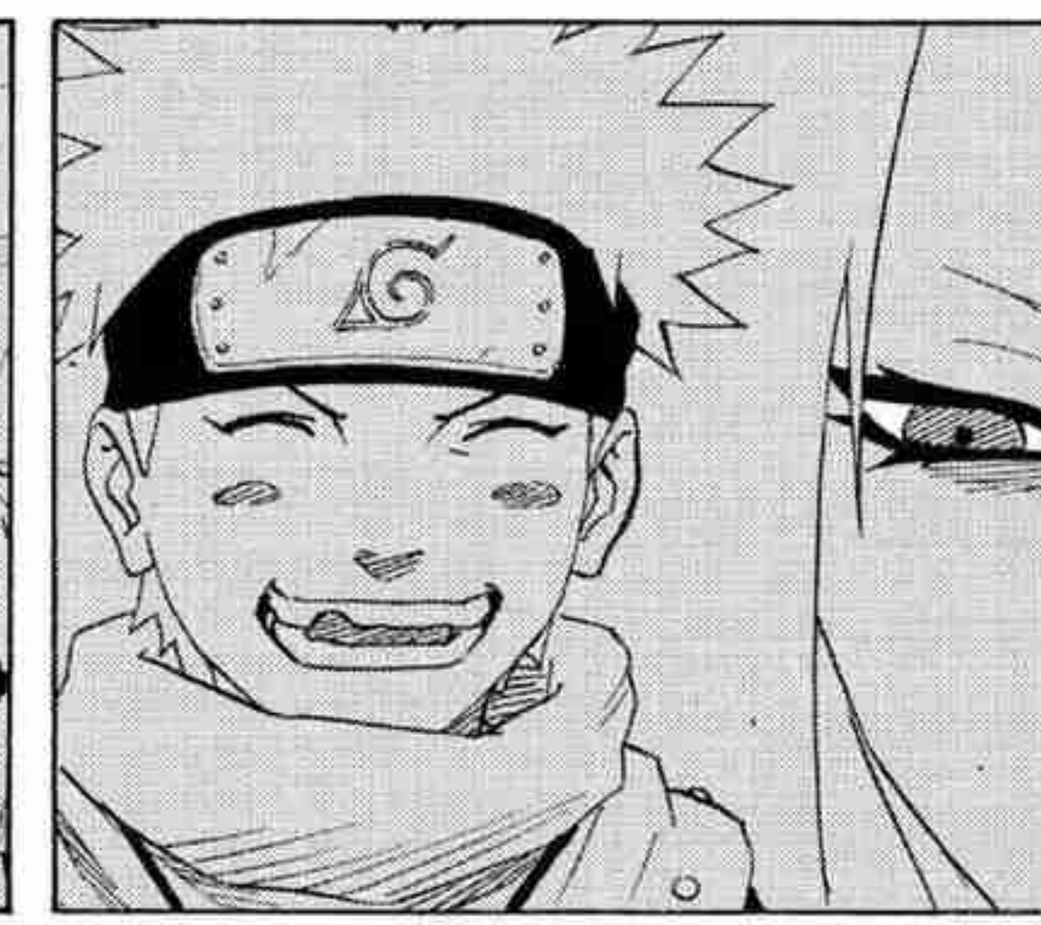
...

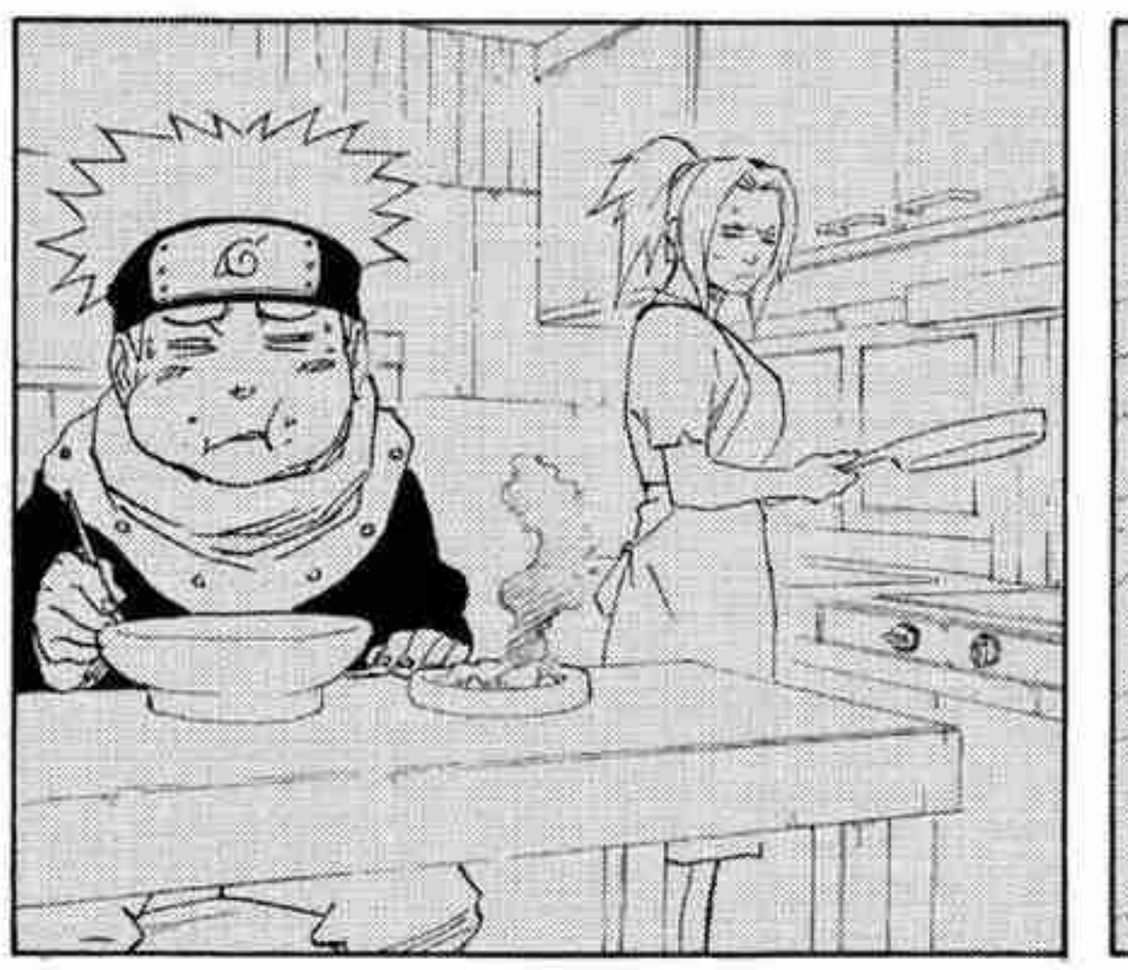


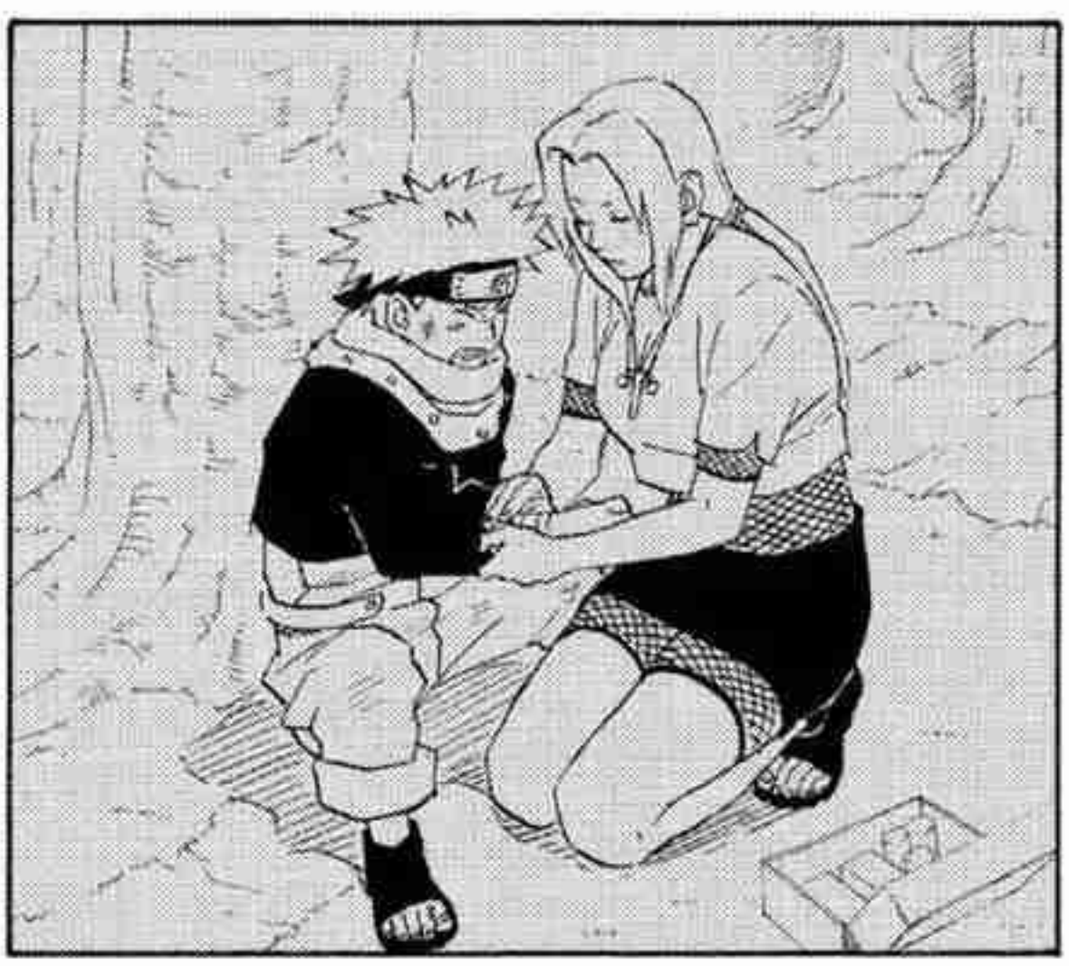
...BUT IN RETURN, LAY OFF THE VILLAGE.
I'LL FIX YOUR ARMS...

...CACKLE CACKLE... VERY WELL.
...

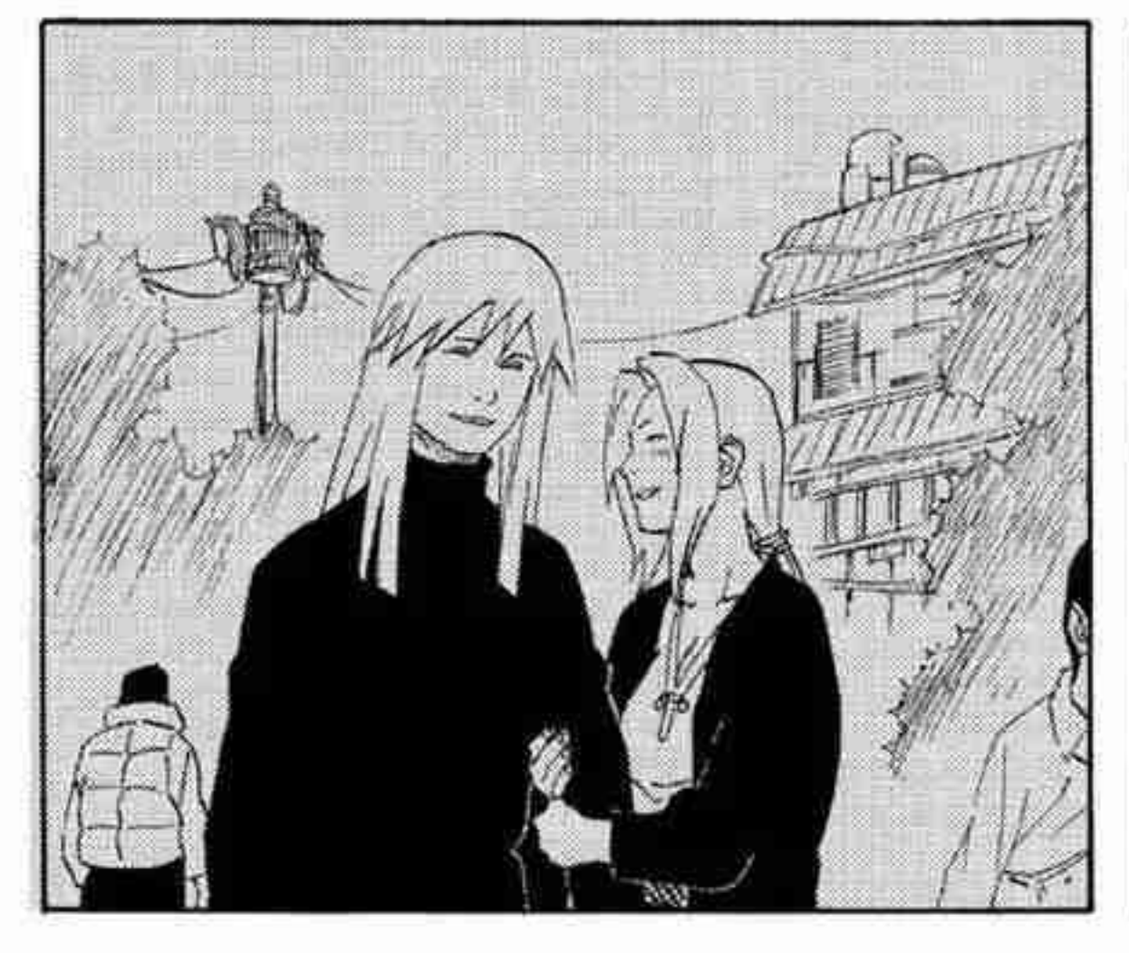


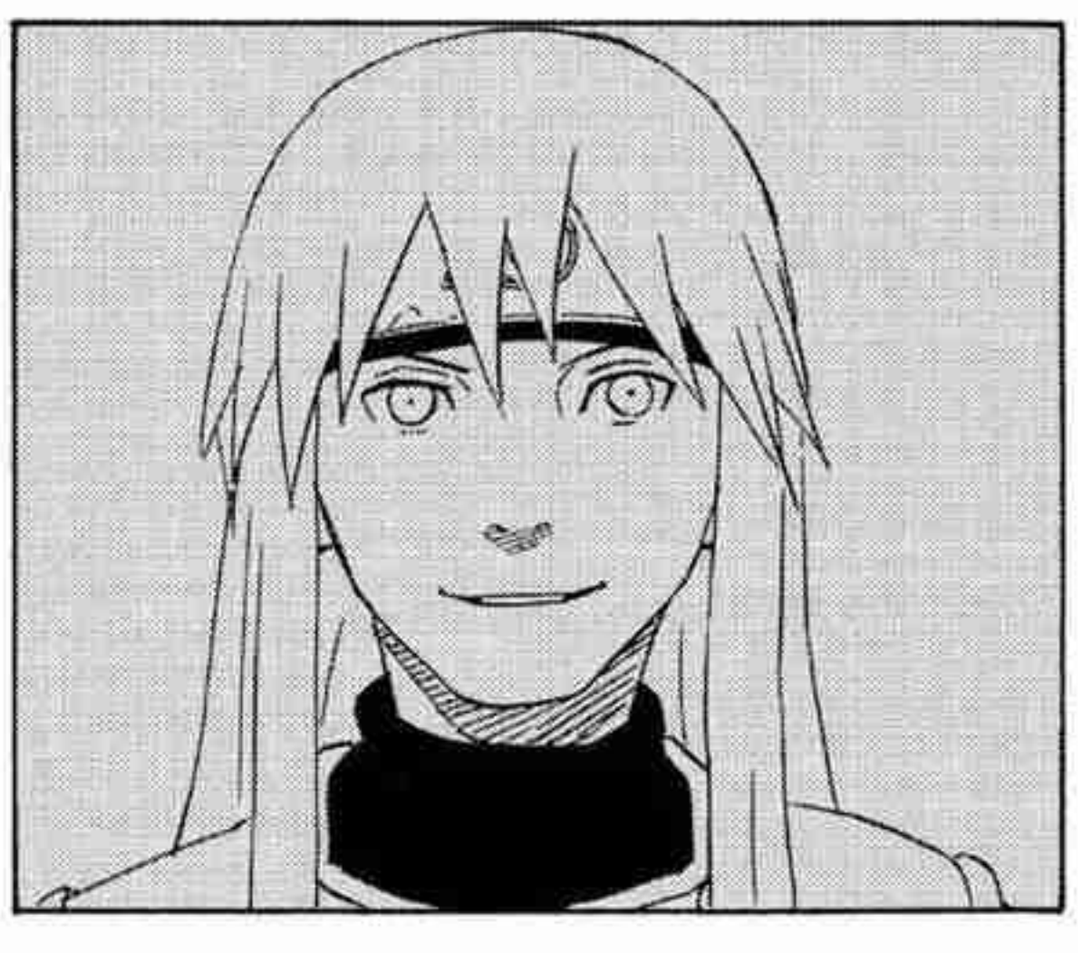


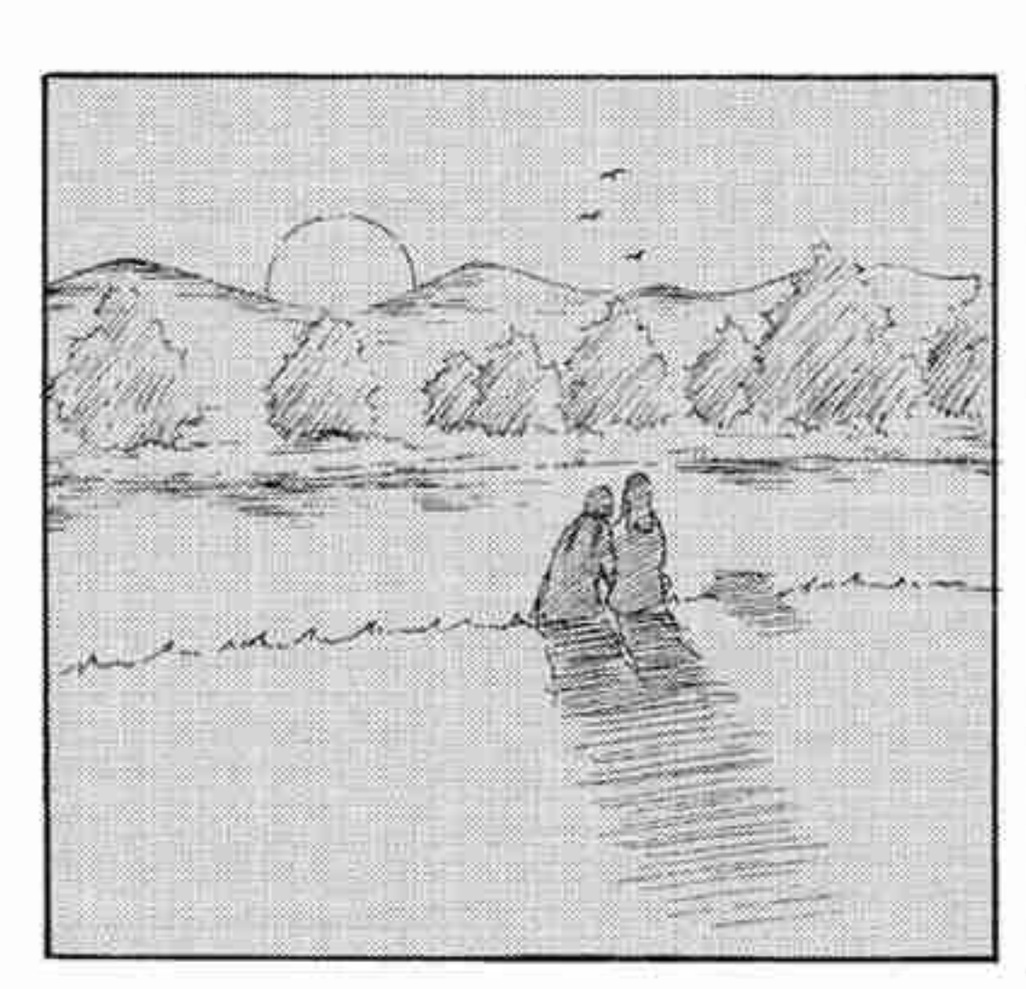


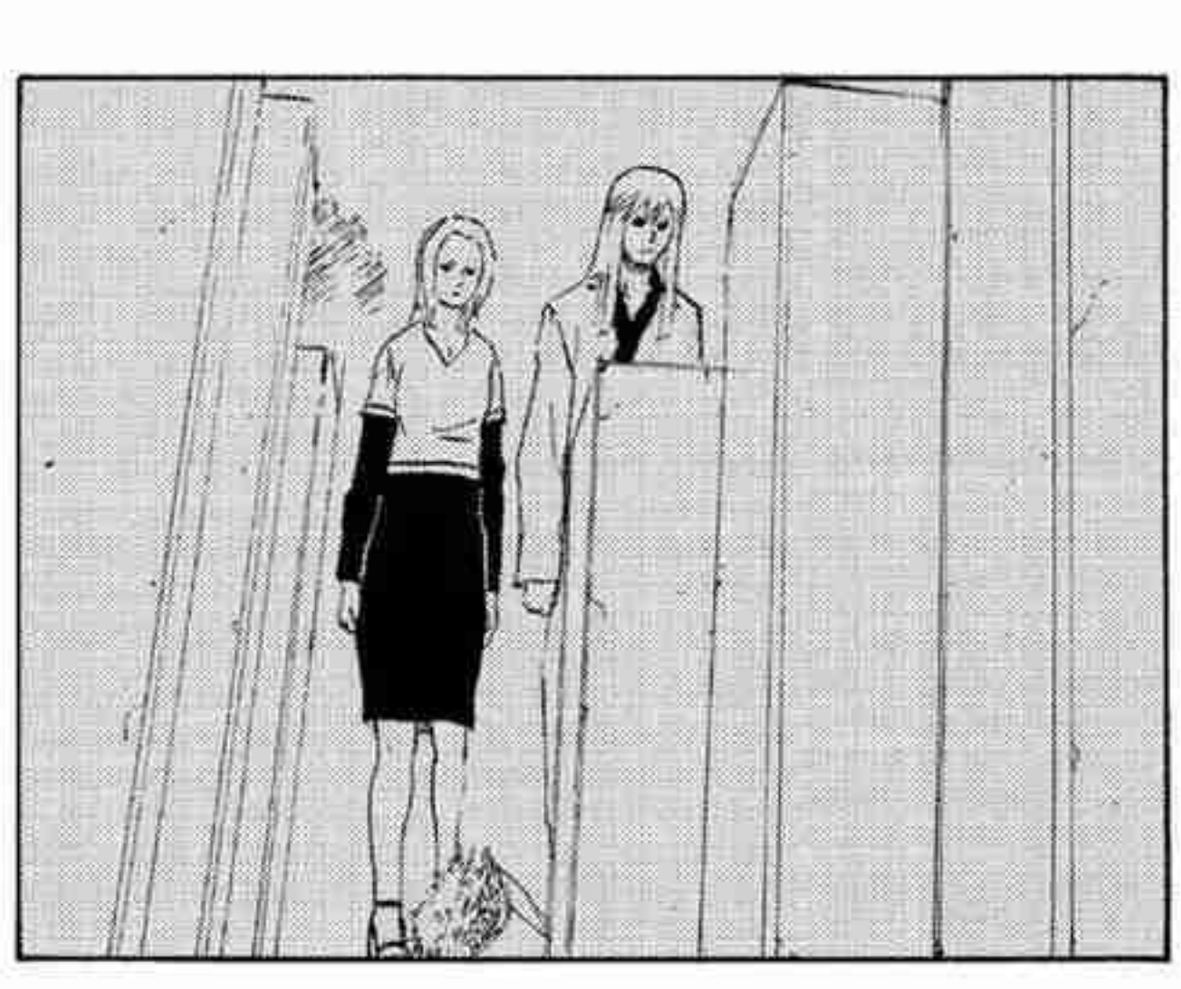


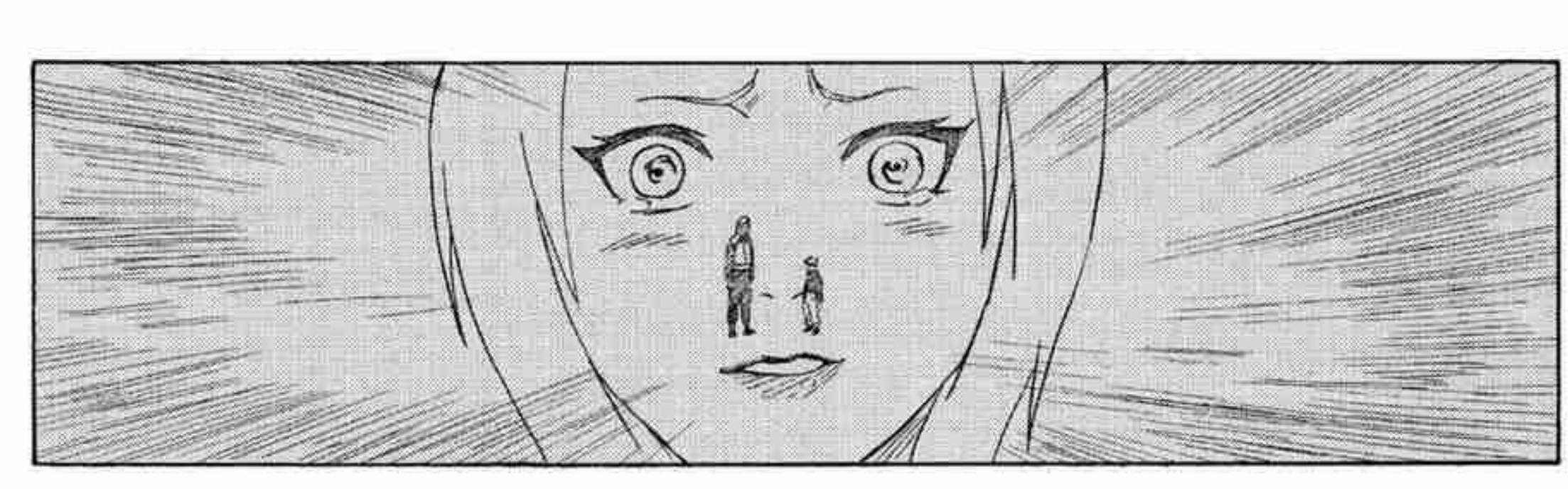
READ
THIS
WAY

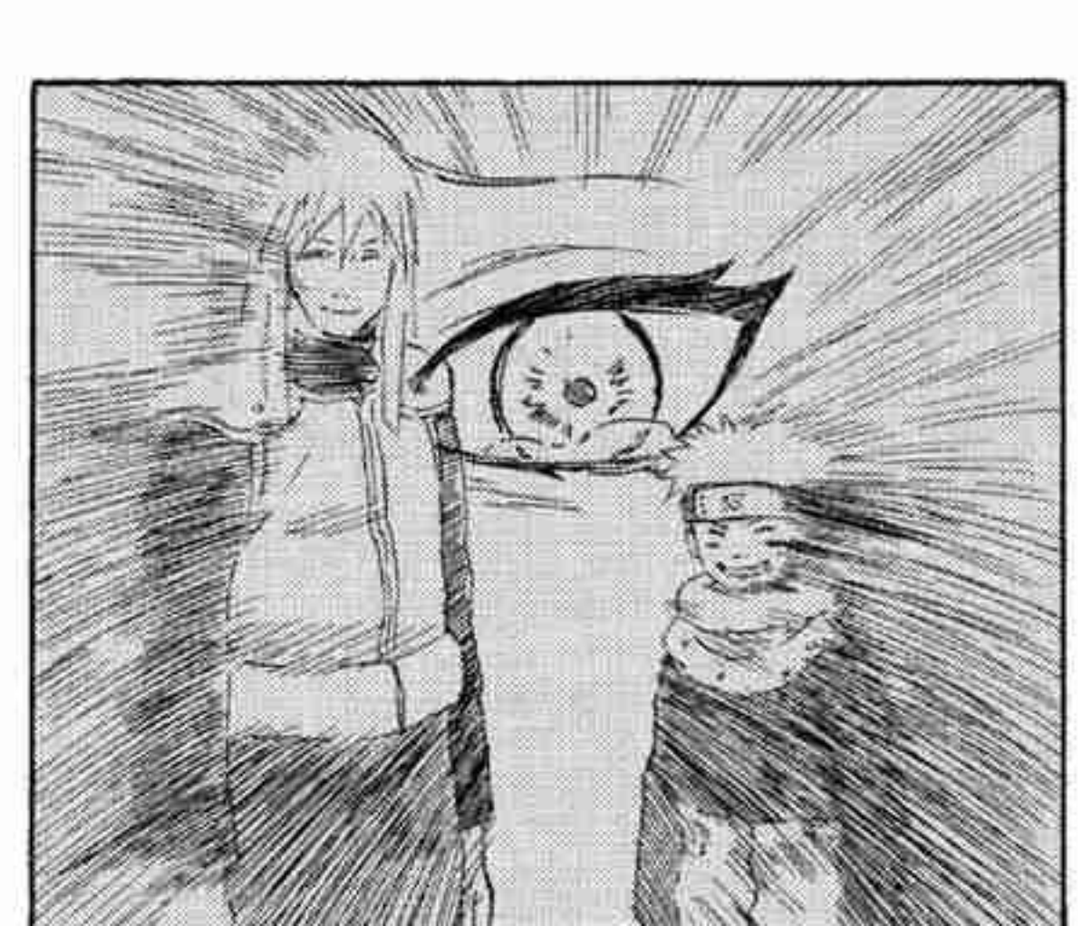




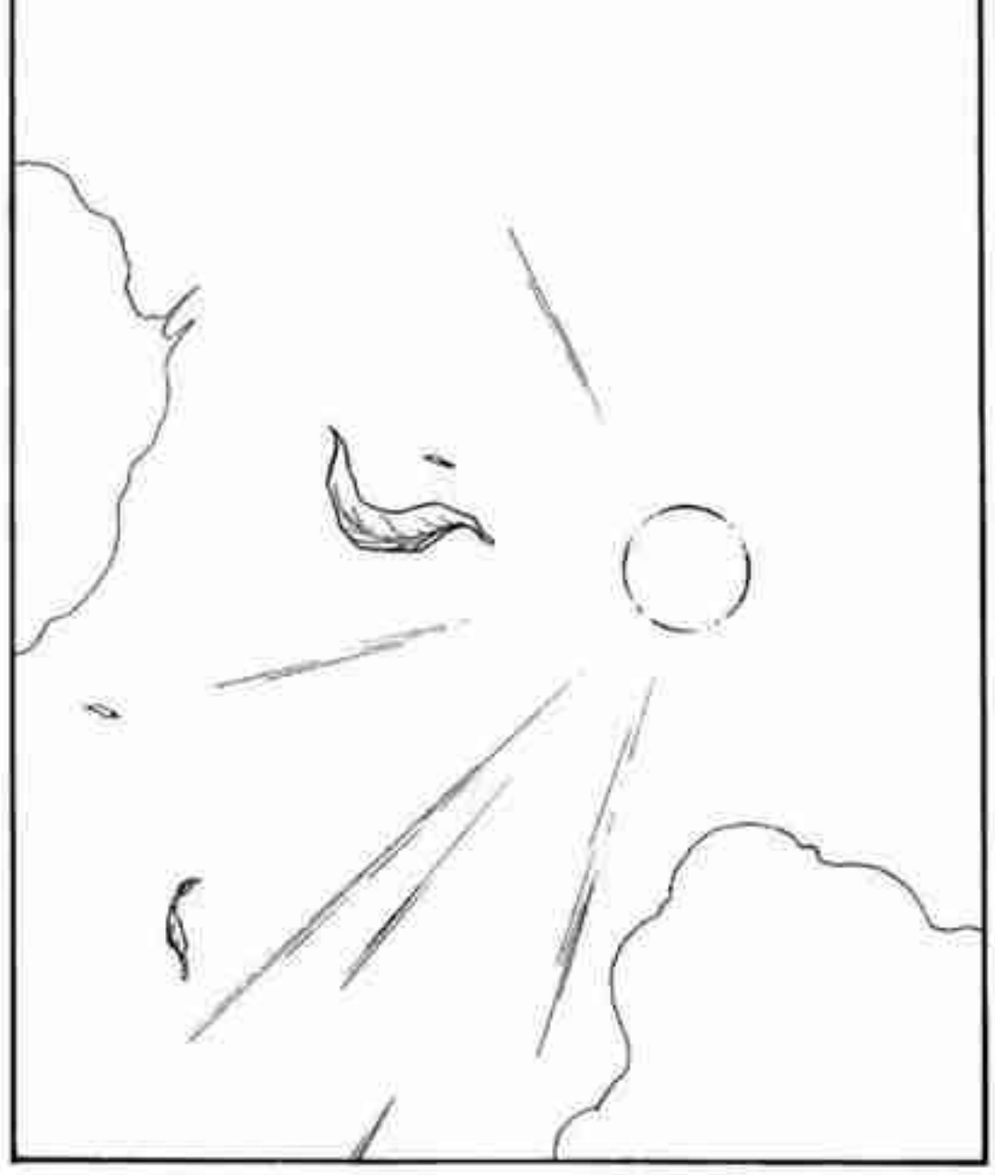


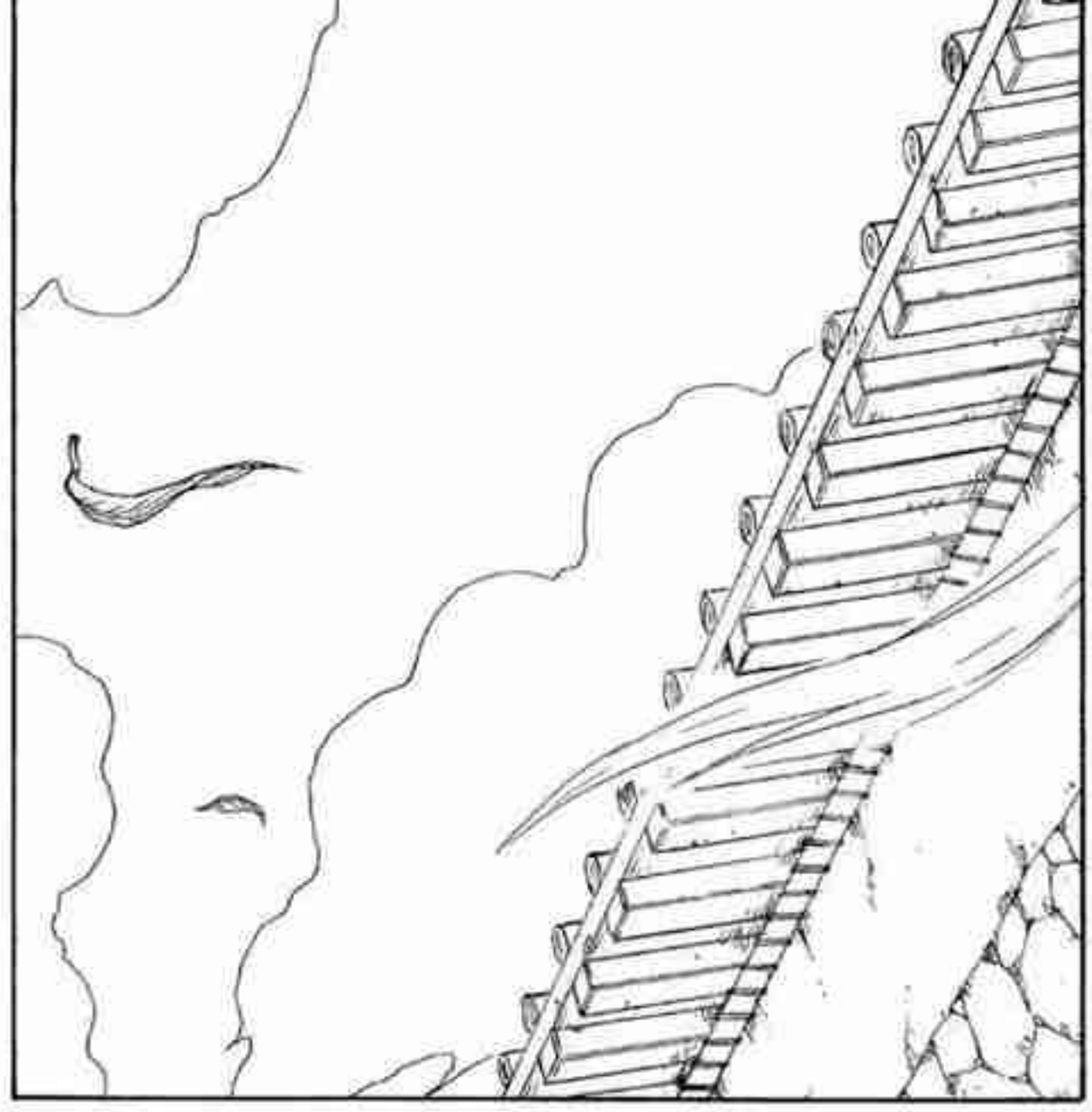


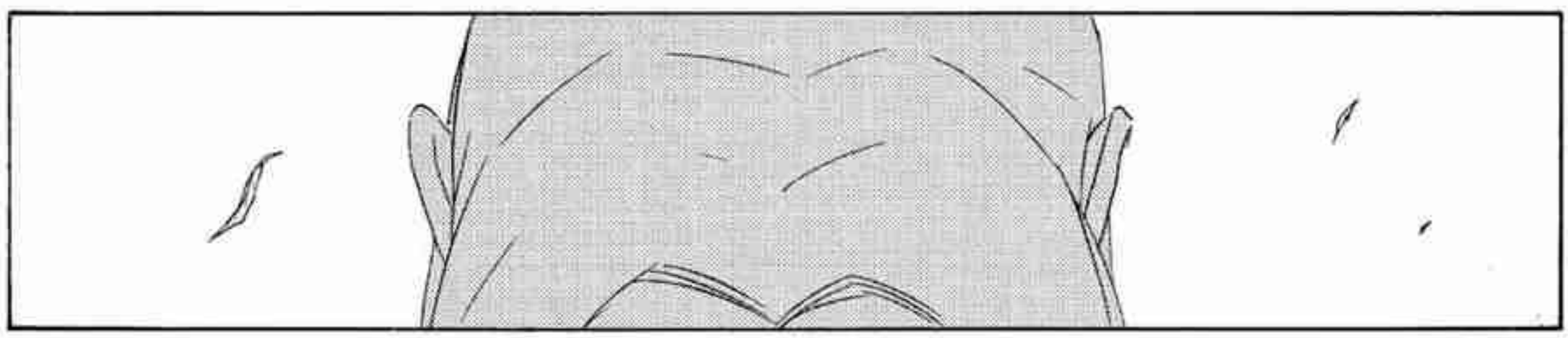


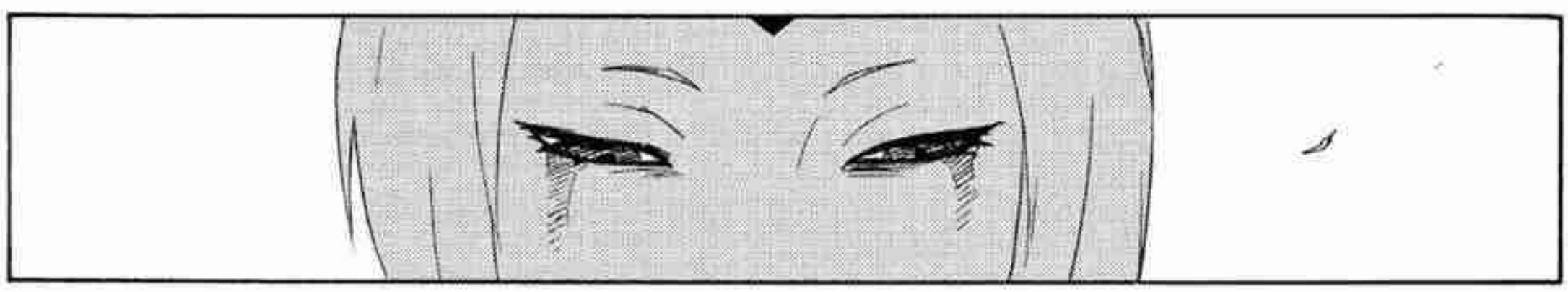


WAFT









TO BE CONTINUED IN *NARUTO* VOLUME 19!!